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Scientist in plague vial case set to appear court

Thursday, January 16, 2003 Posted: 9:51 AM EST (1451 GMT)

LUBBOCK, Texas (CNN) -- The university scientist accused of making false statements to the FBI about missing vials of bacteria that could cause bubonic plague is expected in court Thursday, law enforcement sources said.

Dr. Thomas Butler, 61, chief of the Infectious Disease Division at Texas Tech University's Department of Internal Medicine, was leading a study aimed at developing antibiotics to fight the plague.

One law enforcement source said Butler first notified the school Tuesday that the vials were missing. He repeated this assertion when the FBI questioned him, saying he did not know how or why the vials came to be missing, but he later recanted and admitted destroying them himself, the source said.

The vials were destroyed sometime before January 11, sources said, and Butler allegedly did not fill out the required documentation.

A Texas Tech spokeswoman said Wednesday it is premature to say what action school officials may take and that it is too early to say whether Butler will be suspended pending an investigation.

"I hope we'll be able to continue the research," spokeswoman Cindy Rugeley said.

The vials -- about 30 in all -- were reported missing Tuesday, prompting fears of a potential bioterror threat. Those fears, however, were short-lived, and authorities said all of the vials had been accounted for Wednesday. (More on plague)

Butler's wife said her husband had been interviewed by the FBI and that she knows nothing about the destruction of vials. Mrs. Butler said she believes the situation is being blown out of proportion. "He's a dedicated man and a good person," she said.

The vials contained bacteria samples that could cause bubonic or pneumonic plague. They came from a stock of about 180 vials that are part of a study by Butler, who has more than 25 years' experience with plague research. (Plague treatments)

"This was not weaponized in any way," said Richard Homan, dean of the Texas Tech School of Medicine. "This was material that was obtained through international colleagues of one of our faculty members. It was brought here for further study."

The vials came from the East African nation of Tanzania, law enforcement sources said.

They were all classified as plague, and some were classified as bubonic plague. The college received them in April.

Bacteria and viruses, such as the plague, are widely available to researchers at universities across the United States.

CNN National Correspondent Susan Candiotti and Justice Correspondent Kelli Arena contributed to this report

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Washington Post
January 17, 2003
Pg. 1

Inspectors Find Weapons Cache

Chemical Warheads Were Not Listed By Iraq in Arms Declaration to U.N.

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Jan. 16 -- U.N. weapons inspectors searching a large ammunition dump in the Iraqi desert today discovered a cache of 12 chemical warheads that were not listed in Iraq's final weapons declaration in December, U.N. officials said.

Although it involved only a small number of warheads for 122mm rockets, the finding appeared to place Iraq in technical violation of Security Council resolutions barring it from possessing or developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. But the Bush administration's initial reaction was muted, and officials in Washington did not jump on the discovery to reinforce their repeated argument that President Saddam Hussein has been unwilling to relinquish weapons of mass destruction and must be made to do so by force, if necessary.

The inspectors found the warheads, equipped to deliver chemical agents, in "excellent condition," 11 of them empty and one requiring further testing, a U.N. spokesman said. They were discovered at an army munitions depot about

100 miles south of Baghdad, where the inspectors had gone to examine bunkers constructed in the late 1990s, he added.

"This was an important discovery," a U.N. official involved in the inspections said. "This was clearly something they should not have had." But he added that the discovery was not immediately regarded by inspection leaders as "a smoking gun that proves conclusively Iraq is hiding" or producing chemical weapons.

A senior Iraqi official also played down the importance of today's find, saying his government forgot to mention the warheads in its declaration to the Security Council in December. That document was supposed to provide a final and complete accounting of Iraq's arms stockpile.

The official, Gen. Hussam Mohammed Amin, head of Iraq's weapons-monitoring directorate and the chief liaison to U.N. inspectors, said the chemical shells were overlooked because they were stored in boxes similar to those for conventional 122mm rocket warheads.

"Nobody opened this box," Amin said at a news conference convened less than an hour after the inspectors announced their discovery. "There was no intention to keep them."

Amin said the warheads, which he said were imported in 1986, were too old to be used. "It doesn't represent anything," he said. "It's not dangerous."

Under Security Council resolutions and the cease-fire agreement ending the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Iraq is forbidden to possess chemical, biological or nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Iraq has repeatedly insisted that it no longer possesses any weapons of mass destruction, saying all the chemical and biological arms it produced in the 1980s were destroyed either independently or by earlier groups of U.N. inspectors.

The U.S. government has started in the past week to provide the inspectors with additional intelligence to guide their searches, but today's finding appeared to have been unrelated to that information. In a statement, the U.N. Monitoring, Inspection and Verification Commission said its inspectors traveled to the Ukhaider Ammunition Storage Area to inspect a large group of bunkers built in the late 1990s. The inspectors had noticed the bunkers when they visited the site Jan. 7 as part of their strategy to scrutinize changes at facilities that have long been associated with Iraq's weapons programs and that were visited by teams of inspectors in the 1990s.

Iraq has acknowledged acquiring a large amount of the type of chemical shells that were identified today; its military used chemical weapons a number of times during the 1980-88 war with Iran. But the warheads, which have corrosion-proof plastic liners and other features that are specific to chemical munitions, were technically banned by resolutions issued by the Security Council after the 1991 Gulf War.

After identifying the warheads, which were stored in an older section of the compound, the inspectors used portable X-ray equipment to conduct a preliminary analysis of one of them, U.N. spokesman Hiro Ueki said in a statement. The inspectors also collected samples for chemical testing, he said.

It is highly unusual for the U.N. team to announce the results of an inspection. Since it began visiting sites in Iraq on Nov. 27, officials generally have released only bare-bones information about places they have searched, refraining from mentioning whether any substantive evidence was uncovered. Ueki said he was told to disclose the discovery by his superiors.

The Bush administration has been pressuring the chief U.N. inspector, Hans Blix, to intensify the probe by conducting more intrusive searches and taking Iraqi scientists outside the country for questioning. President Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, traveled to U.N. headquarters in New York on Tuesday to urge Blix to heed the U.S. requests.

Blix, who is scheduled to deliver a progress report to the Security Council on Jan. 27, told the council last week that the inspectors had not yet found a "smoking gun." The Bush administration, which is deploying tens of thousands of additional troops to the Persian Gulf region to be ready for a war, has made no secret of its hope that Blix's next report will provide clearer evidence of Iraqi obstruction and noncompliance.

In that light, Amin, the Iraqi weapons-monitoring chief, accused the U.N. inspection commission of distorting the significance of the warheads in response to U.S. pressure, saying he was "astonished" that it had made an announcement.

"You can't imagine the American pressure on this commission, how they want to make this finding a huge finding which is related to the mass destruction weapons -- chemical or biological," he said. "It is neither chemical, neither biological. It is empty warheads. It is small artillery rockets. It is expired rockets and they were forgotten without any intention to use them."

He accused the inspectors and the United States of "looking for a pretext to declare [war] against Iraq."

"It's all about political goals," he said.

As one team of inspectors was searching the munitions depot, another descended on the homes of two nuclear scientists to conduct unannounced interviews, intensifying their efforts to debrief people believed to be connected to past or current weapons programs.

The inspectors arrived at 9 a.m. at the Baghdad homes of a physicist, Faleh Hassan, and his next-door neighbor, Shaker Jibouri, a nuclear scientist. But the U.N. personnel had to wait in the street for almost an hour while both men were summoned back from their offices. Once they returned, inspectors questioned both men in their homes and searched the premises. The scientists insisted on having Iraqi officials present.
Journalists observed the arms experts poring over documents at a table set up near Hassan's front door.
After almost six hours, Hassan, the director of a military installation that specializes in laser development, left his house carrying a box of documents and got into a U.N. vehicle with an Iraqi official and two inspectors. The group then drove to a field outside Baghdad where they briefly surveyed the grounds and inspected a small dirt mound. Iraqi officials subsequently said the site was a farm that Hassan sold in 1996. The group then proceeded to U.N. offices here, where they photocopied the documents Hassan was carrying.
Before leaving, the chief U.N. field inspector, Demetrius Perricos, engaged in an unusually animated discussion with the Iraqi officials who accompany the inspectors. It was not clear what the men were talking about, but a reporter said he overheard Perricos saying loudly: "I'm not happy about all of this."
Amin said the inspectors also asked two other Iraqi scientists to come to the U.N. offices for an interview. He said the scientists refused to be interviewed there and demanded that Iraqi officials be present during the questioning.
The issue of interviewing weapons scientists has emerged as a key point of controversy among Iraq, the inspectors and the United States. Blix wants his inspectors to be able, at the very least, to question the scientists in private. The Bush administration wants the inspectors to go even further and take key scientists and their families out of Iraq, saying debriefing sessions in another country would allow them to provide more candid disclosures.
Iraqi officials have said scientists are free to choose whether they want to leave, but the officials have said no one wants to go. U.S. officials have depicted that as tantamount to pressuring the scientists not to go.
Hussein's chief science adviser, Gen. Amir Saadi, denied that scientists were being told what to do. "They're aware what's going on," he said. "They're aware of the purpose behind such insistences."
After the inspectors' visit, a visibly angry Jibouri called the search of his house -- which he said included bedrooms, bathrooms and his study -- "provocative and intrusive."
"They searched everything," he growled. "This is . . . police work."
Saadi sought to put the best spin on things, expressing hope that inspections would continue after Jan. 27 so that Iraq's claim it has no banned weapons can be verified.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A3668-2003Jan16.html

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New York Times
January 17, 2003
Pg. 1

Inspectors Find Empty Warheads In An Iraqi Depot

By Julia Preston
UNITED NATIONS, Jan. 16 — United Nations weapons inspectors discovered 11 empty chemical warheads today at an ammunition storage depot in southern Iraq, while another team entered the homes of two Iraqi scientists unannounced, carting away documents.
The inspectors stumbled on the warheads in a bunker at the Ukhaider Ammunition Storage Area, about 90 miles southwest of Baghdad. The trove included 11 empty 122-millimeter chemical warheads and "one warhead that requires further evaluation," said Hiro Ueki, the spokesman for the inspectors in Baghdad. He did not elaborate.
He said the warheads were in "excellent condition" but added that they were "similar to ones imported by Iraq during the late 1980's." He noted, however, that they had been found in bunkers that were not constructed until the late 1990's.
Experts on the arms team, as well as intelligence analysts in Washington and other capitals, rushed to determine whether the warheads had been listed in the voluminous weapons declaration Baghdad presented to the United Nations in December.
The team took X-rays of one warhead and collected samples for chemical testing, he said.
Lt. Gen. Hussam Muhammad Amin, the top Iraqi liaison to the weapons teams, expressed "astonishment" over the hubbub about the warheads, saying they were short-range shells imported in the late 1980's. He insisted that they were registered in the declaration.
He said that the boxes containing the munitions were covered with dust, and that the warheads were empty.

"No chemical or biological warheads," he said at a news conference, "just empty rockets which are expired and imported in 1988."

A report issued in 1998 shows that an earlier team of inspectors made a similar discovery at the Ukhaider facility, coming upon 12 155-millimeter shells, filled with mustard gas, by a roadside near the depot.

Although Iraqi officials asserted at the time that the chemical agent was old and deteriorated, the inspectors found that the mustard gas "was still of the highest quality." The 1998 report said Iraq had failed to account for 550 mustard gas shells it said had been "lost" in 1991.

Inspectors went to the Baghdad homes of two scientists, Faleh Hassan, a physicist, and Shaker el-Jibouri, a nuclear scientist who lived next door. The inspections were the first carried out in private homes.

The inspectors spent six hours in the home of Mr. Hassan, and at the end he emerged with them carrying a box of documents and drove away in a United Nations vehicle. The papers were "related to past proscribed activities," Mr. Ueki said.

During the inspection, Demetrius Perricos, director of operations for the weapons teams, had a heated argument with Iraqi officials in front of Mr. Hassan's house. "I'm not happy about all of this," he said.

After the house inspections, the teams drove to a field west of Baghdad, where they and Mr. Hassan briefly examined a mound of earth, The Associated Press reported.

Mr. Hassan complained that the inspectors had occupied his home for two hours and looked everywhere, "including into beds and clothes." He said the papers inspectors studied were for "personal research." Waving what he said were his wife's medical X-rays, he complained that she was ill, and he accused inspectors of invading her privacy.

Two more Iraqi scientists that the inspectors asked to interview insisted that government officials be present, General Amin said.

President Bush said again today that time was getting short for the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, to give up prohibited weapons.

"So far the evidence hasn't been very good that he is disarming," Mr. Bush said in a speech in Scranton, Pa. "And time is running out. At some point in time the United States' patience will run out."

The administration has not let up in its pressure on the inspectors to work faster and more aggressively.

In London, Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief atomic inspector, said that the inspectors would become more aggressive but that they required more time to do a thorough job. "We still have a bit of work to do, and therefore we are going to ask for at least a few months to be able to complete our job," he said.

In Moscow, Foreign Minister Igor S. Ivanov protested the Bush administration's pressure on the inspectors.

"We are concerned about the mounting pressure on the international inspectors and the heads of inspections teams in Iraq on the part of certain circles in Washington," Mr. Ivanov said. He said that the inspectors "represent dozens of countries," and that Russia is waiting for "objective and highly professional" information from them.

Hans Blix, who heads the chemical and biological weapons team, issued one of his bluntest warnings yet to Iraq, saying that if it does not provide better cooperation, it will face "the other major option, the one that we have seen taking shape in the form of armed action against Iraq."

Up to now Mr. Blix has said he was reluctant to bring Iraqi experts out of the country for interviews, as Washington has insisted, until all the logistical details were worked out, including granting asylum in some foreign country once they left.

Today Mr. Blix changed his message, saying one way Iraq could show better cooperation "would be to let them talk without any minder present," adding, "Another would be to accept that they go abroad, if they want to do so."

In a Security Council meeting here today, the United States stepped back from a confrontation with other nations over how to reconcile timetables for the inspections laid out in two different Council resolutions. The American ambassador, John D. Negroponte, said Washington would handle the dispute "in a way that maintains Council unity on one hand and keeps the pressure on Iraq."

The Council's discussion was about whether the inspectors should follow the steps in Resolution 1441, which set up the current inspections regime, or in Resolution 1284, the December 1999 measure that first established the weapons teams. American officials said they did not agree with a proposal by Mr. Blix to issue a major report at the end of March on the work still to be done, as called for in Resolution 1284.

The Council agreed to leave the debate until after a report by the inspectors scheduled for Jan. 27.

As part of the steady buildup of forces in the Persian Gulf region, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld was considering the deployment of three more aircraft carriers within striking distance of Iraq, Pentagon and military officials said today.

The deployment order, which would bring to five the number of aircraft carriers around Iraq should Mr. Bush order the nation to war, had not been signed by late tonight, officials said.

The carrier Harry S. Truman was already sailing in the Mediterranean, and the Constellation was in the Persian Gulf. Draft orders now under consideration would deploy the Theodore Roosevelt from the East Coast, the Abraham Lincoln, which is now in Australia, and the Kitty Hawk, based in Japan.
Officials said that because of tensions with North Korea, the Carl Vinson would sail from the West Coast to fill the Kitty Hawk's position in Asian waters, according to the proposed deployment orders.
The George Washington, based on the East Coast, was told to be ready for speedy deployment.
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Washington Post
January 17, 2003
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U.S. Hastens To Assess Pair Of Iraq Findings

Physicist's Documents Intrigue Officials

By Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writers

The Bush administration mobilized yesterday to assess two discoveries by U.N. weapons inspectors in Iraq, trying to determine if either held the seeds of a serious violation of November's Security Council resolution.
Officials reacted cautiously to the announcement in Baghdad that inspectors had uncovered 12 artillery rockets, empty but outfitted to carry chemical weapons. Until more is known about the discovery, administration officials would not comment on its importance.
Iraq's failure to list the munitions in a weapons declaration it gave the U.N. Security Council last month was a violation of Baghdad's international obligations, officials said. But they expressed little expectation that chief inspector Hans Blix would consider it a "material breach" of the resolution that could lead to approval of a military attack.
Administration officials expressed more interest in documents taken from the Baghdad home of an Iraqi physicist, Faleh Hassan. Hassan, who is director of Razi, a military installation that specializes in laser development, demanded copies of the documents and had a brief argument with inspectors before accompanying them to U.N. headquarters. Iraqi officials sat in as Hassan was interviewed; he and the officials were given copies of the Arabic-language documents.
The reports from Baghdad came as the administration stepped up its verbal pressure on Saddam Hussein while continuing military deployments to the region. President Bush said yesterday that "time is running out" for Hussein. "So far, the evidence hasn't been very good that he is disarming," Bush said. "At some point in time, the United States' patience will run out. In the name of peace, if he does not disarm, I will lead a coalition of the willing to disarm Saddam Hussein."
Barring conclusive discoveries in Iraq, early Security Council agreement on a military attack against Iraq appeared unlikely. With U.S. forces edging toward full deployment under a war plan more than a year in the making, Bush may decide that a more limited "coalition of the willing" is his best option.
In New York yesterday, the United States faced broad Security Council opposition to a proposal to block Blix from scheduling a new report on Iraqi disarmament in late March. The administration, eager to keep day-to-day pressure on Baghdad, wants the 15-member council to suspend Blix's plans to present a list of disarmament obligations Iraq must meet before U.N. sanctions can be suspended.
"We have some questions as to whether . . . March 27 is the right time to outline key remaining disarmament tasks . . . and to talk about an ongoing verification and monitoring regime because we believe that would leave the impression that most of the disarmament tasks had already been accomplished," said John D. Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.
Negroponte said he would continue to make his case to the council in the coming weeks, but pledged to try to resolve the matter in a way that would "maintain council unity . . . and keep the pressure on Iraq to cooperate."
Blix told the council Tuesday that the March meeting is required under the 1999 resolution that created the inspection agency. The administration believes that all elements of the earlier resolution were superseded by the tough new resolution adopted in November. Its last scheduled date for a formal report from Blix is Jan. 27.
But several council diplomats said Washington's initiative had little hope of succeeding in a body where the majority is eager to avoid a military confrontation and wants the inspections to continue. "My feeling is that the Americans

will not get what they want," a senior council member said. "If they had any sense, they would report back to Washington that they aren't going to have their way and drop it."
U.N. officials in New York were reluctant to discuss the discovery of new documents and the chemical weapons shells. While waiting for detailed reports from the field, they were "unable to assess the significance of either event," said Ewen Buchanan, a spokesman for Blix's U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. U.N. sources said examination of the documents and the warheads likely would take several days. Serial numbers on the munitions will be checked to determine whether they are left over from purchases made in the 1980s, as the Iraqis claimed, or were obtained more recently. Chemical tests will also be conducted to determine if the warheads ever held chemical agents.
Iraq possessed tens of thousands of chemical munitions during the 1980s. U.N. inspectors have long been aware of the Ukhaider ammunition storage facility, where the warheads were found yesterday. It had been declared as a weapons site during previous U.N. inspections in the 1990s and warehoused 155mm mustard gas shells and 122mm rockets armed with lethal sarin gas. The weapons were destroyed by the earlier inspectors.
The CIA has said that Iraq never accounted for as many as 15,000 additional such warheads equipped to carry chemical weapons, although it believes a number of them were destroyed. The Iraqi government, which has said it has no chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, described yesterday's discovery as too insignificant to put in its declaration.
Jonathan Tucker, a former U.N. inspector now with the Institute of Peace, said all shells, rockets or bombs that can deliver chemical or biological payloads are proscribed under U.N. resolutions, whether they contain the toxic materials or not. Tucker called yesterday's find "a technical violation but one that could be part of a larger pattern." He described the find "more as the smell of cordite than a smoking gun."
"I think Blix can make a compelling case that inspections have been gearing up to full force and finally are in a position to be effective," Tucker said. "They should be allowed to continue to see if this may be the tip of an iceberg, but I still don't think this is sufficient."
Blix, who will travel to Iraq this weekend, said yesterday that "the message we want to bring to Baghdad is that the situation is very tense . . . that everybody wants to see a verified, credible disarmament of Iraq." In the face of strong U.S. pressure to intensify inspections, Blix has said Iraq's cooperation has been largely "passive." During a stop in Brussels yesterday, he said Baghdad had "only been opening doors on the ground, and that is not enough. They must give information."
Staff writer Colum Lynch contributed from U.N. headquarters in New York.
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Iraq Said To Be Stashing Arms Underground, In Residences

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times
The United States believes Iraq has moved prohibited weapons components to private residences, underground facilities and mobile sites to foil intelligence efforts to pinpoint their locations.
Some U.S. officials believe Iraqi President Saddam Hussein moved weapons-making machinery and tools to Tikrit, his center of power 90 miles north of Baghdad.
Tikrit, once an isolated provincial town, has seen a building boom, particularly in the past 10 years. Saddam has diverted millions of dollars in oil revenue to erect new houses, government buildings, mosques, a university and hospitals on the banks of the Tigris River.
One official said there are reports that Saddam has hidden or buried critical materials in the neighborhoods of his loyalists in Tikrit.
A U.S. official, however, said the administration has nothing to corroborate the information. "We hear similar things all the time. There are so many rumors coming out of Iraq," the official said.
A U.N. team, directed by Hans Blix, is now inside Iraq searching for weapons prohibited by a series of U.N. resolutions, including No. 1441 passed by the Security Council in December. One U.S. official said in an interview that the team should start aggressive searches in Tikrit.

It was Iraq's refusal to let inspectors visit one of Saddam's most opulent palaces in Tikrit that eventually led the previous U.N. inspections team, Unscom, to leave Iraq in February 1998. President Clinton responded by ordering air strikes for four days on Iraqi military sites, including barracks in Tikrit.
Saddam was born in the village of Auja, just south of Tikrit. Some of his most fanatical followers and troops reside in the city. Many of his top aides in Baghdad call Tikrit home.
U.S. officials speculate that, if the United States invades, Saddam might try to escape to his home province and hide among his loyalists.
Military sources say, the U.S. war plan calls for isolating Tikrit and striking military barracks there. They say to conquer Iraq, the United States or friendly Iraqi troops must control Baghdad, Basra in the south, and Tikrit.
The city of 29,000 — primarily Sunni Muslims — is defended by 4,000 troops, armored vehicles and anti-aircraft artillery. Support for Saddam is so fierce that Tikrit could prove to be the last major piece of real estate to fall to any U.S.-directed coalition. Its importance is one reason the Bush administration is pressing Turkey to allow American ground troops to deploy to bases there in preparation for an invasion of northern Iraq.
U.S. officials say Baghdad runs a concealment program, with personnel dedicated to moving components around the country to avoid detection. Defectors have given firsthand accounts of Iraqis moving materials into private residences.
"We do know that Iraq has designed its programs in a way that they can proceed in an environment of inspections and that they are skilled at denial and deception," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said this week.
The benchmark for judging Saddam's compliance with U.N. disarmament edicts is the 1998 final report of the U.N. inspection team. That team reported huge discrepancies in the weapons components it positively identified as having been produced and Iraq's denial that they ever existed or Iraq's assertion that it destroyed such articles.
Some of the weapons components identified by the United Nations but not found, according to the 1998 report, were four tons of VX nerve gas, 550 artillery shells filled with mustard gas, components to make three or four nuclear weapons devices, up to 50 Scud ballistic missiles and 157 bombs filled with germ agents.
Kelly Motz and Gary Milhollin, who run the research project Iraq Watch, said yesterday they believe that the 1998 U.N. report is credible and that Saddam is hiding large stocks of weapons.
"For example, the missiles are probably taken apart in different components and stored separately," Ms. Motz said.
Said Mr. Milhollin, "In general, we are told that much of Iraq's capability is positioned so that it can be moved quickly. There are machines that are waiting to be loaded on trucks wherever they are operating."
http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030117-907642.htm

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Washington Times
January 17, 2003
Pg. 1

North Korea Weapons A 'Nuclear Nightmare'

By Michele Lerner, Special To The Washington Times
North Korea's record of weapons proliferation and terrorism has raised fears that its nuclear bombs could fall into the hands of al Qaeda terrorists, weapons specialists and diplomats said.
"A nuclear nightmare — and one that is within the realm of the possible — is the export by North Korea of nuclear material, and even nuclear weapons, to terrorists," said William Potter, director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.
"Certainly, groups such as al Qaeda must be attracted by the prospect of unsafeguarded nuclear material controlled by an impoverished and isolated regime which already has broken many of its international nonproliferation commitments," Mr. Potter said.
Since North Korea announced its intention on Jan. 10 to withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, concern has focused on the possibility that the Stalinist nation would use spent fuel rods from a mothballed reactor to build additional nuclear bombs.
The United States believes North Korea already has two nuclear bombs to complement its massive army, potent ballistic-missile force and stockpile of biological and chemical weapons.
Although there is no hard evidence linking Osama bin Laden's terrorist network to North Korea, Pyongyang has sold missiles and technology to Iran, Pakistan, Yemen and others.

"It's a frightening scenario," said a diplomat with broad experience in Asia. "We know al Qaeda wants these weapons, and we know North Korea desperately needs hard currency."

A CIA report to Congress made public earlier this month identified North Korea as a key supplier of nuclear-, chemical- and biological-weapons materials and missiles to other nations.

The CIA stated that during the last six months of 2001, "North Korea continued to export significant ballistic-missile–related equipment, components, materials and technical expertise to the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa.

"Pyongyang attaches high priority to the development and sale of ballistic missiles and equipment, and related technology. Exports of ballistic missiles and related technology are one of the North's major sources of hard currency, which fuel continued missile development and production."

The report made no connection between North Korea and weapons support to terrorist groups.

However, the report said the threat of terrorists using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons "appears to be rising."

The CIA found evidence during the war in Afghanistan of al Qaeda efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

That intelligence, according to the Congressional Research Service, "influenced the Bush administration to broaden the definition of the war against terrorism to include states like North Korea that potentially could supply weapons of mass destruction to al Qaeda."

North Korea's mercurial leader, Kim Jong-il, has in the past used those weapons successfully as bargaining chips with the United States, Japan and South Korea to garner aid to prop up his moribund economy.

For the past decade, Washington and its allies have feared that a miscalculation by Mr. Kim, whose government earlier this week dismissed conciliatory gestures from the Bush administration, might lead to a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, where 37,000 U.S. soldiers are stationed south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

The North's record on terrorism, which includes the bombing of civilian airliners, assassinations and kidnappings, also makes it an appealing partner for international terrorists in the wake of September 11, analysts say.

In its rhetorical blasts at the United States, officially atheist North Korea last week even borrowed a phrase from Muslim fanatics by vowing to wage a "holy war" against the United States.

North Korea has had links for decades with Japanese Red Army terrorists who regularly traveled between Pyongyang and the Middle East.

While terrorist links conjure up horrific scenarios, defense analysts and diplomats warn that North Korea could act alone out of desperation.

"Even if they dragged a nuclear bomb to the DMZ in an ox cart, the effects could be devastating," said the Asian diplomat, who asked for anonymity.

In December 2001 the National Intelligence Council, an advisory board reporting to the CIA director, determined in a "finding" that North Korea has produced one, possibly two, nuclear bombs.

If it goes ahead with reprocessing fuel rods from its dormant Yongbyon plant, it could produce enough plutonium for four to six more bombs within four months, U.S. officials say.

In addition, North Korea since the 1960s has been working on biological weapons including smallpox, cholera, yellow fever, typhus and other viruses.

"North Korea has a dedicated, national-level effort to achieve a biological-weapons capability and has developed and produced, and may have weaponized, biological weapons," John R. Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, told a congressional hearing last year.

Pyongyang also is believed to have the capacity to produce some 4,500 tons of chemical weapons annually, including mustard, phosgene and sarin, which could be delivered across the DMZ by artillery.

North Korea's ballistic-missile arsenal includes hundreds of Scuds and No Dong rockets.

It is developing Taepo Dong-2 missiles that would be capable of reaching the United States, according to a recent CIA National Intelligence Estimate.

Even a conventional war on the Korean Peninsula would be catastrophic.

North Korea's 1.2-million-man army is the world's fourth- or fifth-largest fighting force.

Two-thirds of those soldiers are stationed within 60 miles of the DMZ, along with thousands of Cold War-era tanks and armored personnel carriers.

"Korea remains a place where U.S. forces could almost instantaneously become engaged in a high-intensity war involving significant ground, air and naval forces," the former commander of U.S. forces in Korea, Gen. Thomas A. Schwartz, told a congressional committee last year. "Such a war would cause loss of life numbering in the hundreds of thousands and cause billions of dollars in property destruction."

Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Washington-based Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, points out that nuclear-weapons programs in Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and the Ukraine were shuttered only after transitions away from military or militaristic governments.
http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030117-25255995.htm

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Los Angeles Times
January 17, 2003

Design Of Weapons Simple But Deadly

Rockets, with a 12-mile range, are built to effectively disperse chemical agents on troops, and also intended to sow panic.

By Paul Richter, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- The chemical weapons discovered by U.N. inspectors in an Iraqi warehouse Thursday have a simple, durable design and are intended to frighten and demoralize enemy troops as well as kill them.

The 122-millimeter rockets with chemical warheads can carry their deadly agents in gas or liquid form. They are usually fired in volleys of dozens of rockets at a time, to try to ensure that enemy troops are enveloped in a thick concentration of chemicals.

U.S. officials believe that the Iraqis have stores of lethal sarin gas, as well as VX, a heavy liquid that disperses in oily droplets that would cling to troops' skin, clothing and equipment. The Iraqis also know how to use blistering agents, such as mustard gas, and choking agents, such as chlorine gas, said Jon Wolfsthal, a nonproliferation expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Tim Brown, a senior analyst at GlobalSecurity.org, a Washington-area defense consultant, said the chemicals are loaded into a hollow outer casing of the rocket. The explosives are inserted in an inner core, and the fuse is placed in the nose.

The rockets are fired when the operator sets off a propellant charge in the tail. When the warhead reaches a certain altitude or distance toward the target, the fuse sets off the explosives, releasing the chemicals. Stabilizing fins keep the rockets on a straight trajectory. They have a range of up to 12 miles.

The rockets follow a Soviet design that has been widely copied. The basic technology dates to World War II.

It can be tricky to use the weapons effectively. If the chemicals are released at too high an altitude, or in too much wind, they will disperse and do little harm, experts say.

The Iraqis have "weaponized" chemicals in artillery and mortar shells, aerial bombs and grenades. But rockets offer the best way to mount a highly concentrated chemical attack, Brown said, because a rocket launcher can carry as many as 40 rockets.

Unlike conventional rockets and artillery shells, chemical warheads have a relatively thin outer wall. When they explode, they make a low thudding sound that is noticeably different from the loud report of a conventional shell, and is easily identifiable by troops on the battlefield.

Brown said the use of chemical weapons can quickly panic troops on the battlefield, making it difficult for them to carry on and operate their complex weapons and equipment.

The Iraqi army is the most experienced in the world in the use of chemical weapons. Iraq fired thousands of chemical rockets and artillery shells at Iran during their 1980-88 war, inflicting an estimated 50,000 casualties, including untold thousands of deaths, on Iranian troops and civilians.

Saddam Hussein's attack on Iraqi Kurds in the city of Halabja in 1988 is believed to be the biggest single chemical assault on a civilian population in modern times. Five thousand ethnic Kurds died.

The Iraqis didn't attack U.S. troops with chemical weapons during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, yet some U.S. veterans blamed chemical weapons releases for the unexplained ailments that cropped up among veterans after the conflict. About 60,000 U.S. troops have filed claims for injuries from that war.

http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/la-fg-warheads17jan17.story

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Columbus (OH) Dispatch
January 15, 2003
Pg. 1

Ex-Iraqi Scientist Describes His Role

By Tim Feran, The Columbus Dispatch

The man who led Saddam Hussein's atomic-weapons program says the world has two to three years to prevent the Iraqi dictator from possessing nuclear weapons.

Even if Saddam owned such weapons, he would be unlikely to use them, said Khidhir Hamza, the MIT-trained scientist who was part of Iraq's nuclear-arms program for several decades.

Hamza is the focus of a documentary on the History Channel Thursday night. Saddam's Bombmaker is part of a weeklong look at the Gulf War and a possible new conflict in that region.

Hamza escaped from Iraq in 1994 and arrived in the United States in 1995.

"We had mastered three of four uranium-enriching programs" needed to make a bomb, he said. "Any one could be online now. All the other technology for a weapon is available. This is the only thing remaining -- providing bomb-grade uranium -- and this is what scientists know, the critical piece in this puzzle.

"Iraq is working full time to rebuild its nuclear-weapons-building program."

Last summer, Hamza argued before a Senate panel that the best way to ensure disarmament of Iraq is to seek out Iraqi scientists and have them taken out of the country, along with their families.

"Iraq's main assets now are its scientists," Hamza said during a phone interview.

Hamza was teaching at Florida State University in the 1960s when he was obliged to return to Iraq and work for the government as repayment for his education.

He said that he and other scientists thought the atomic weapons that they were working on would take so long to develop that dictators such as Saddam would never be able to use them.

"That was a serious mistake. We were just naive scientists back home to do our work. We had nothing, not even a library. . . . Iraq was living 200 years behind the times until we decided the only way to get the government interested was if we could make weapons.

"It was naive to think we could deceive Saddam. Once we established the core he needed, he pushed for more until he became the horror he is. He brought in the security apparatus, the chemical and biological apparatus; we were part of it without being aware of it."

Through the years, Hamza became familiar with Saddam, his put-downs and his idiocyncracies. He thinks he knows whether Iraq already has built an atomic weapon.

"I don't believe, nor does U.S. intelligence, nor does British intelligence, nor does German intelligence believe, that Iraq has nuclear weapons. I believe they are two to three years away -- 2005 would be the target. So this is a window of opportunity. Iraq has no nuclear weapon to use.

"If they have it, they would declare it. Its value is in not using it. Once you use it, you are finished. Its value is its deterrence value."

Rachel Bronson, director of Middle East Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, a foreign-policy research group based in New York, agreed with much of what Hamza said.

"These are certainly his opinions, so there's no right or wrong to them," she said.

But Jon B. Alterman, director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Middle East Program, a Washington policy institute, said: "Dr. Hamza left Iraq some time ago, so it's difficult to know how accurate his assessments of Iraq's current capacities might be."

Hamza thinks the Sept. 11 terrorist attack was Saddam's revenge against the United States after his defeat in the Gulf War.

The fact that Osama bin Laden reportedly loathes Saddam is of little consequence in linking the two, Hamza said.

"These guys are users. Religion to them is just a tool. Their goals meet, the directions are the same. It's all directed against the U.S. Their goal is to remove the U.S. from the Middle East. Their utterances, how to achieve this, are meaningless."

Alterman is far less certain.

"Commonality of interest is often a necessary but never a sufficient basis on which to establish a link," he said.

Bronson also disagreed with Hamza's link of Saddam and bin Laden.

"The U.S. government tried to make the case but couldn't come up with anything," she said. "It's more of a minority view, but it's certainly out there."

Despite fears that taking action against Saddam would fuel further resentment in the Muslim world against the United States, Hamza said Iraqis are ready to see the dictator go.

"The people know who is the culprit. The demands of the U.S. have been very clear," he said. "Iraq has never allowed full transparency. They know Saddam.
"The resentment is from Arab states who support Saddam. . . . They would like Saddam to stay because one of their greatest fears is for there to be democracy in Iraq. . . . then they would be forced to democratize.
"That's the resentment."
Alterman said resentment exists among Arabs outside their governments, but he linked it to politics rather than religion or culture.
"There is deep anti-U.S. sentiment in the Arab world, much of which boils down to a resentment that the U.S. does not use its power as a force for good. Many Arabs complain that the U.S. is blindly and unfairly supportive of Israel, and they also complain that the U.S. props up brutal authoritarian regimes. It is an open question what would affect this sentiment, and many argue that, in fact, anti-U.S. sentiment in the Arab world and beyond doesn't matter much."
Bronson said reaction to an invasion is unclear.
"Whether the Iraqis will appreciate American intervention, no one can really know. I tend to agree with him; so do many others. But we won't know for sure until we do it."
Hamza was firm.
"If the U.S. goes in, replaces this butcher and installs a democracy, who's going to resent that? That's why 4 million Iraqis left Iraq since the Gulf War, why they're roaming the world," because they want democracy, he said.
http://libpub.dispatch.com/cgi-bin/documentv1?DBLIST=cd03&DOCNUM=2153&TERMV=211:2:214:5:219:9:228:9:237:3:240:4:

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DefenseNews.com
January 16, 2003

Aldridge Calls For Study Of U.S. Military's Role In Homeland Defense

By William Matthews

A senior U.S. defense official says it is time to reconsider the military's traditionally limited role in homeland defense.

Pentagon acquisition chief Edward "Pete" Aldridge has asked the Defense Science Board to conduct a sweeping examination of "what specific roles and missions" the military should have in homeland defense, from how troops should be used to what technology the services should be developing..

Traditionally, the military's role in domestic security has been limited. The 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, for example, forbids using the military in domestic law enforcement. In recent years, amendments to the act have permitted the use of troops and equipment to assist law enforcement agencies in some instances, such as counter-drug operations and security at events like the Olympics. But the act was cited in 2001 as a reason not to use federal troops to guard airports in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. National Guard troops, under the control of state governors, were used instead.

In a Jan. 6 memo to Defense Science Board Chairman William Schneider, Aldridge said the military's limited role is "under review in light of grave terrorist and other threats to U.S. territory and citizenry."

The Defense Department has much to offer to homeland security, he said. It "has access to many of the systems engineering, technical capabilities, relevant technologies, logistics expertise and modeling and simulation capabilities needed for effective homeland security," Aldridge wrote.

He asked the Defense Science Board to conduct a "summer study" that ranges from "specific roles and missions" for the military in homeland security to how the military can work with state and local governments.

Other subjects to be studied include:

• Responsibilities of the Northern Command, which was established last autumn to conduct homeland defense and civil support missions.
• The role of the National Guard and other reserve forces in homeland defense.
• Information sharing and fusion with other government and non-government entities.

• Homeland security cooperation with Mexico and Canada.

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San Antonio Express-News
January 16, 2003

Smallpox Shots Produce No Bad Reactions In S.A.

By Sig Christenson, Express-News Military Writer

The Army and Air Force said this week that all 66 people who've been given smallpox vaccinations in San Antonio have had "normal" reactions to the drug, and plans are being made to inoculate hundreds more.

Thirty-six soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center were inoculated with no adverse reactions, spokeswoman Norma Guerra said. Of 30 in the Air Force, including 14 inoculated on Jan. 2 at Wilford Hall Medical Center, several have complained of muscle aches.

Only one complained of fever.

"This is good," said Col. (Dr.) Larry Hagan, educational director for Wilford Hall's Department of Allergy and Immunology. "I think it's better than I thought it would be."

Word of the military's success with its fledgling smallpox inoculation program came 10 days after 14 Air Force officers and enlistees were given the vaccine. Those inoculations were the first given here in a decade.

The Pentagon resumed the inoculations in mid-December at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. Walter Reed gave the shots to more than 170 military personnel, and has since reported that no one has showed serious reactions to the drug, according to the Washington Post.

It wasn't clear how many military personnel have been given the vaccine or how many have encountered ill effects. Pentagon spokesman Jim Turner wouldn't offer details but noted that just 3 percent missed a day of work after taking the shots. Those taking the vaccine for the first time were slightly more likely to miss work than those who had previously received it, he said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 15 to 42 of every million people vaccinated will suffer severe or life-threatening complications.

A scourge for centuries, smallpox was declared eradicated in 1980 by the World Health Organization, with the last naturally occurring case found three years before in Somalia. Military vaccinations continued, but were limited to recruits entering basic training. They were stopped more than 10 years ago.

The Defense Department has already inoculated 500,000 troops against anthrax. The Pentagon's Turner said more than that would be given smallpox shots.

A little more than 10 million public health workers in cities and towns around the nation also will be given the vaccinations. While the U.S. government is offering the vaccine to volunteer smallpox response teams, it's not recommending the public get inoculations. Provisions, though, are being made for those who want the vaccine.

The Texas National Guard will give the shots to its troops, too. Those going overseas "would be the higher priority to get the shots," said the guard's chief, Maj. Gen. Wayne D. Marty.

Closer to home, some members of Air Force smallpox response teams at Brooks City-Base have been given the shots. But installation spokesman Larry Farlow declined to provide numbers or other details.

"Ultimately it's a question of balancing risks, the risk of having an adverse reaction to the vaccine vs. the risk of contracting smallpox," said Andrew Krepinevich Jr., a former aide to three defense secretaries who heads the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

He added: "The risk, of course, of contracting smallpox increases if you, for example, go into a combat zone in Iraq."

http://news.mysanantonio.com/story.cfm?xla=saen&xlc=920029

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Los Angeles Times
January 17, 2003

Chemicals Bound For Libya Seized, Paper Says

By Times Wire Reports

Police in the northern Italian port of Genoa have seized 50 tons of U.N.-banned chemicals that can be used to make mustard gas, and the cargo was bound for Libya, a published report said.
The chemicals were produced in Germany and were being shipped before Christmas by an unidentified Belgian company "with close ties to Muslims," La Repubblica newspaper said, without identifying its source. The Libyan business that was to get the chemicals said they were for pesticides, the report said.
http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-briefs17.2jan17.story

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Washington Post
January 21, 2003
Pg. 1

U.S. Acts To Stem A Gulf War Legacy

Military Hopes New System Keeps Health Syndrome at Bay

By David Brown, Washington Post Staff Writer

As it lays the groundwork for another war with Iraq, the U.S military is engaged in a massive effort to prevent the reappearance of Gulf War syndrome.

Over the decade that followed the 1991 Persian Gulf conflict, the chronic illnesses that tens of thousands of veterans described ultimately marred the U.S. victory. The agonizing investigation of what came to be known as Gulf War syndrome eroded trust in the military, cost hundreds of millions of dollars and consumed thousands of years of human labor.

As American troops prepare to face the same enemy in the same place, military planners hope that this time they can keep the perplexing phenomenon at bay. Their weapons include health questionnaires, epidemiological studies, a powerful computer system, soil-sampling kits, a new generation of detectors for nerve gas and biological threats, and millions of tubes of human serum stored at 25 degrees below zero.

"Is a replay a concern? The answer is definitely yes," said Col. Robert F. DeFraites, an Army epidemiologist who investigated the first vague physical complaints that Gulf War veterans reported 10 years ago this spring. "I think we feel it could come back again."

It is not too much to say that the experience of Gulf War syndrome in a small way is remaking the art of modern warfare. The damage and confusion it wreaked has created a new world of things for commanders to worry about. No longer is it enough to bring well-trained fighters to a place where they can engage the enemy. Now, the military is determined to document each soldier's sense of his own health, counsel him on what to fear beyond bullets and bombs, and test the air he breathes and the soil below his billet.

"Our focus used to be only on winning the battle, and that still is the focus," said Lt. Col. Karl Friedl, director of operational medical research for the Army. "But now there's this greatly increased attention on post-deployment health. We didn't use to think about that."

The sheer number of people complaining of illness after the Gulf War helped change that view. Perhaps as many as 160,000 of the nearly 700,000 men and women who served in Operation Desert Storm may have suffered lingering physical symptoms in its aftermath. Over a decade, the government funded 224 research projects, costing $213 million, to try to uncover the cause, extent and best treatment for the illness.

The investigation has taken so long partly because so many questions raised by veterans could not be answered. Were all the chemical weapons alarms that sounded on or near the battlefield false alarms? Were toxic chemicals in the ground and air? Who received the anthrax vaccine? Where were troops on particular days? What was the physical and mental state of the soldiers before they shipped out?

The military's inability to give clear answers to these and many other questions, while understandable to some observers, fueled the belief that horrible events may have occurred during the war, and might have been averted. In the end, however, military health officials and most civilian researchers who studied the subject do not believe anything unusual or undiscovered occurred in the Gulf War to cause chronic illness. This time, the military is determined to begin and conclude the conflict with much better information.

The preventive medicine machine that will roll into battle with U.S. soldiers if war erupts serves two purposes. The first is to monitor and mitigate actual threats to health. The second is to collect data that will allow everyone from the secretary of defense to doctors to better answer the questions from veterans after this or other deployments.

Perhaps the most widespread belief among those with Gulf War syndrome is that they encountered toxic substances during the conflict that later made them ill. While most scenarios were implausible, this did not keep the military

from coming under withering criticism by Congress, panels of experts and the media for not knowing enough about the battlefield environment, and who was in it.

A New Focus on Hazards

Today, about 500 active-duty soldiers are trained to routinely monitor air, water and soil wherever troops go. This new focus on environmental hazards began right after the Gulf War. When American peacekeeping troops went to Bosnia, 2,500 samples were processed, and in Kosovo, 1,500. More than 1,000 have been taken so far in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

A profile of environmental hazards has been added to this information, gleaned from decades of surveillance photography and other intelligence, for many parts of the world where U.S. troops might be sent. This information, along with the lab test results, routinely goes to commanders for use in planning missions.

Much of this work is coordinated by civilian scientists and planners at the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. On Dec. 28, the center began getting daily reports of troop locations, down to the company level, for American soldiers deployed to Central Asia, effectively capturing the other side of the exposure equation. A request has been made to obtain similar reports from Iraq if troops go there.

"That whole culture didn't exist in 1991 as it does now," said John Resta, the center's director of health risk management.

The surveillance technologies that have undergone the biggest change are chemical and biological weapons detectors.

The military's main chemical sensor during the Gulf War, the M8A1, gave frequent false alarms, which frayed nerves and forced soldiers repeatedly to don protective suits. It has been replaced by devices that are much better at distinguishing between true threats, such as nerve gas and mustard agents, from innumerable other contaminants in the air.

Among the four new chemical detection systems is one that can detect vapors and aerosols at a distance.

Sampling for biological agents -- a much more difficult task -- was not done routinely during the Gulf War. Now, there are five types of biodetectors in use that can detect bacterial or viral threats such as anthrax, botulinum toxin or plague.

"We have learned our lessons," Army Brig. Gen. Stephen Reeves, head of chemical and biological defense, said last week. "We have applied the lessons of Desert Storm."

Many of the disease surveillance and prevention efforts take place far from the battlefield. Some rely on decades-old methods that have been updated and given greater prominence by the Gulf War experience. Others are wholly new. Among those is the requirement that every soldier fill out a "health assessment" questionnaire just before deploying and right after returning. The forms have fewer than 10 questions. Some can be answered by filling in circles -- "Would you say your health in general is" followed by five choices. Others, not mandatory, call for written responses, such as, "Do you currently have any questions or concerns about your health?" and "Do you have concerns about possible exposures or events during this deployment?"

The form serves two purposes. A doctor reviews it upon completion, and thus "it allows the provider to interact with the patient" just before deployment, said Lt. Col. Mark V. Rubertone, an epidemiologist who heads the Army Medical Surveillance Activity.

Later transformed into digital files, the form goes into the Defense Medical Surveillance System, part of the military's computerized medical record, where the scannable answers can be easily studied en masse. Researchers wanting to read the answers can call up a digital image of the completed form. Amassed with hundreds or thousands of others, the forms make possible something approaching "instant epidemiology."

Among the sorts of things that Army researchers are now able to determine is that 61.7 percent of troops deployed in 2000 and 2001 reported the same health status on the before and after questionnaires. Forty eight percent of soldiers returning from Uzbekistan last year expressed concern about exposures, with uranium, radiation, asbestos, chemical agents and tuberculosis topping the list. Soldiers who went to Southwest Asia, however, were only half as likely to be concerned about possible exposures as their comrades who went to Bosnia.

The medical surveillance system also records each soldier's history of outpatient medical care and hospitalizations. There has been a particular effort -- not entirely successful, several officials said -- to include a full immunization record. Many ailing Gulf War veterans said they received vaccines that were never recorded in their charts.

Human Clues to the Illness

Supplementing this information is the Department of Defense Serum Repository, located in Silver Spring. It holds 30 million samples from 7.5 million individuals -- the world's largest such collection.

The repository began in 1989 when the military began archiving blood left over from routine AIDS testing. The Gulf War experience, however, has made it a working tool. Every deployed soldier now must have a sample not more than 12 months old in the repository before shipping out.
Serum is the watery straw-colored liquid left over after red and white cells have been removed from a sample of blood. It contains proteins, antibodies and traces of any unusual chemicals a person may have absorbed recently. It cannot answer every health question. But it can answer some.
Recently, for example, a military researcher used it to address the concerns of 62 Gulf War veterans with hepatitis C who believed they acquired the viral infection in the Gulf. He tested their pre-war samples and found that 58 were infected before they left.
The military is also sponsoring or running several studies seeking to assess the physical and mental state of military units and their members before they go overseas.
Before the Bosnia deployment, for example, members of a Massachusetts National Guard unit took a 15-minute test of verbal and math processing, reaction time and memory. They took it again in the Balkans, and a third time when they came home. The results have not been published. About 2,000 people in two battalions in Fort Lewis, Washington, are now undergoing neuropsychological testing in anticipation of going to Iraq. These studies may lead to routine testing in the future.
"Our goal would be to eventually baseline everyone," Lt. Col. Friedl said.
Perhaps the most ambitious epidemiological project is a long-term study of a randomly chosen sample from all branches of the armed services. Called the Millennium Cohort, it has enrolled 75,000 people and will add 20,000 more in 2004 and 2007. Its members answer a long questionnaire about their health, habits, symptoms and daily functioning -- exactly what was not known about Gulf War veterans before they got ill. They will be resurveyed every three years for 21 years.
"It's fair to say that the Gulf War experience was largely responsible for its creation," said Cmdr. Margaret A.K. Ryan, the Navy epidemiologist in charge of the Millennium Cohort.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19112-2003Jan20.html

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New York Times
January 21, 2003
Pg. 1

Iraq Accepting A U.S. Demand

By Ian Fisher
BAGHDAD, Iraq, Jan. 20 — Iraq said today that it would urge its scientists to agree to private interviews with United Nations arms inspectors, bowing to a central American demand in advance of a report by the inspectors next week to the Security Council.
The undertaking by Iraq was among 10 specific commitments made today to the inspectors. Hans Blix, the chief United Nations inspector for chemical and biological weapons, called them "positive steps" toward better Iraqi cooperation with teams searching for weapons of mass destruction.
"We need to come to an effective and credible inspection process," Mr. Blix told reporters here before leaving for Athens. "We have come a long way on that. But there have been hitches on it, and some of these hitches have been solved today."
Just a week before they are to deliver a crucial report on Iraq to the Security Council, the inspectors seemed to win most of what they were demanding in two days of high-level talks here with Iraqi officials that did not include a meeting with President Saddam Hussein.
By making the commitments, Iraq seemed intent on convincing members of the United Nations, particularly those in Europe wary of a United States-led attack, that Iraq is willing to compromise and that inspections need more time and are a better option than war.
Mr. Blix said that "there are a number of points which otherwise would have been negative" in the report that now will count in Iraq's favor if it follows through. But he cautioned, "This is a big report, and there are many other matters in it."
Under the terms of Security Council Resolution 1441, the Nov. 8 measure that set up the current tough weapons inspections, Iraq is required to "cooperate fully" with the inspections, and the inspectors are authorized to conduct interviews with Iraqi experts.

Up to now, Iraq has been blocking those interviews, making it clear to scientists that it wanted government officials to be present.

In several meetings late last year with Mr. Blix and Mohammad ElBaradei, his counterpart for nuclear weapons, Iraqi officials pledged that they would cooperate fully with the inspections. In practice, however, the inspectors have said, the only aspect of the inspections that has gone smoothly has been gaining access to Iraqi sites.

Still unsettled, both Mr. Blix and Dr. El-Baradei made clear, is the larger question of whether Iraq has presented sufficient evidence that it has indeed disarmed.

In a later interview, Mr. Blix rejected the suggestion that the report next Monday should be decisive. But he suggested that the United States might view the report that way.

"It is an update," he told several reporters in the interview. "It is you guys who have made it into the end of history. And maybe some member states will make it the end of history. But for us, it's an update. We are supposed to report on how inspections go."

The United States, with large numbers of troops already massed in the Persian Gulf region, has made clear that it will regard Mr. Blix's report as a critical test of whether Mr. Hussein is cooperating with the United Nations or persisting in what it says is a pattern of deception and obfuscation that may justify war.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said at the United Nations today that Iraq's pledges to the weapons inspectors were "just more of the same," adding, "Only under pressure does Iraq respond."

"We cannot let them dribble this information, dribble these items out for as long as they choose to in an effort to thwart the will of the international community," he said.

Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, was equally skeptical, saying: "We're only interested in actions. After 11 or 12 years of watching Saddam Hussein give his word and not keep it, his word is not as meaningful as his actions."

Iraq, after two days of talks with the inspectors, said it would be more cooperative in several areas. The commitments made today appeared to amount to an attempt by the Iraqis to bring themselves into compliance with Resolution 1441.

The most sensitive issue for the Iraqis and one of the most important for the administration was that of interviews with Iraqi scientists, who so far have not been willing to speak with inspectors about weapons programs.

The commitment Iraq made today says scientists who are asked for interviews in private and without government "minders" will be "encouraged to accept this."

Amir al-Saadi, a top scientific aide to Mr. Hussein, said, "It is in our interest to answer questions relevant to Iraq's programs, past programs, in that Iraq is clean."

So far the inspectors have requested interviews with six scientists, and Mr. Blix said today that he expected that list to grow.

Mr. Saadi said scientists would be allowed to go abroad to speak with inspectors. Up to now, the Iraqi government has expressed opposition to such departures, and inspectors have said the fear of retribution to scientists and family members is a real bar to that actually happening.

The resolution says the inspectors "may at their discretion conduct interviews inside or outside Iraq" with scientists or other Iraqi officials. But Iraq has up to now balked, angering the Bush administration.

Such interviews could provide intelligence demonstrating that Mr. Hussein has hidden chemical or biological weapons and is still engaged, contrary to his repeated statements, in the quest to obtain nuclear arms.

Iraq also said today that it would begin a further search for 122-millimeter warheads that deliver chemical weapons. On Thursday inspectors uncovered 12 such weapons, empty and old but not declared previously to the United Nations. Then on Sunday night, Iraq itself admitted to uncovering four more. American officials have called the discoveries "troubling."

The Iraqis further agreed not to follow United Nations helicopters into the no-flight zones in the north and south patrolled by American and British warplanes.

An inspection mission on Saturday was scrapped after the Iraqis insisted on sending their own helicopters along with United Nations helicopters to the north. From now on, Iraqi officials who accompany inspectors will be permitted on United Nations helicopters.

Mr. Blix said that the Iraqi commitments were largely procedural and that Iraq had still not reached the level of "pro-active" cooperation the inspectors are seeking.

"It's a more positive cooperation," he said. "Pro-active would require very active effort on their part to bring forward evidence, documents, interviews."

The talks were intended to deal only with the day-to-day business of the inspections, which resumed in November under the threat of war from the United States, as well as several specific problems that had cropped up in recent days.

Mr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei continued to say today that the proof of disarmament in 12,000 pages of documents Iraq provided in December was insufficient. As part of today's commitment, Iraq restated a pledge to clarify questions about key areas of concern, including stores of VX nerve gas and reports of imports of uranium and of aluminum tubes for making missiles.
The two sides could not agree, however, on allowing American U-2 spy planes to operate over Iraqi territory, though the inspectors had proposed that the planes be marked as United Nations planes assisting in the inspections.
"It's still a spy plane," Mr. Saadi said.
http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/21/international/middleeast/21BAGH.html

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Washington Post
January 21, 2003
Pg. 13

Russian Envoy, N. Korean Leader Meet In Effort To Resolve Crisis

By Doug Struck, Washington Post Foreign Service
SEOUL, Jan. 20 -- A Russian envoy met today with Kim Jong Il, the reclusive leader of North Korea, to try to work out a deal to end the crisis over that country's efforts to make nuclear weapons, while the United States proposed increasing the stakes by taking the issue to the U.N. Security Council.
The Security Council could approve sanctions on North Korea leading to an embargo, further boxing in the impoverished country. A U.S. diplomat in Beijing said China, North Korea's closest ally, signaled it would not block such a move.
The Russian envoy, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov, was the first foreign diplomat to meet directly with Kim since the crisis erupted in October. Losyukov is among a collection of foreign diplomats crisscrossing the region in search of a solution.
Losyukov presented Kim with what he called a "package plan" patterned closely on the agreement that ended a similar standoff between North Korea and the United States in 1994.
The plan would reaffirm a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, requiring Pyongyang to give up its uranium enrichment program and submit to international inspections under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
In return, North Korea would get a written guarantee from the United States that it would not attack. That would help calm the alarm felt by the government there, which the Bush administration has labeled part of an "axis of evil."
Under the Russian plan, the United States also would have to help North Korea economically, assistance that the government in Pyongyang felt was promised under the 1994 pact but never delivered.
Emerging from six hours of meetings in Pyongyang today, Losyukov called the dialogue "successful," according to reports in Seoul and Moscow. "We put forward our ideas on what a compromise solution to the current crisis could look like. The Korean side constructively and attentively considered these proposals," Losyukov said, according to the Russian Tass news agency.
Secretary of State Colin L. Powell also hinted at progress, saying at a news conference in New York today that some "interesting elements" had emerged from the diplomacy.
The Russian plan appears to coincide with terms that have been roughly outlined by U.S. officials in recent days -- a lure of resumed aid for an end to the nuclear program. Washington is likely to insist on credible verification of the end of North Korea's nuclear ambitions, however. And analysts said the Bush administration would also probably propose other forms of energy assistance to North Korea to replace the two light-water reactors that were promised in the 1994 accord.
Losyukov was due to leave Pyongyang for Beijing on Tuesday, and reports in Moscow said Kim's reply to his proposal might be made directly to President Vladimir Putin.
"This work cannot be limited to one round of contacts," Losyukov said, according to Russian Tass.
South Korean officials planned to press the issue further Tuesday in talks with lower-level officials in Seoul, Pyongyang and at North Korea's Mount Kumgang resort.

Meanwhile, the United States began pressing to put the matter before the Security Council, a step that could raise the pressures on North Korea and risk a further escalation by the combative government. It has said sanctions would be tantamount to a declaration of war.
Powell noted that North Korea had ignored a resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency condemning its nuclear program. "I think the IAEA therefore has an obligation to refer the matter to the Security Council for the Security Council to make its own judgment as to what it wishes to do," he said.
In Beijing, Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton said it was time to take the nuclear standoff to the Security Council. Bolton added that he did not believe China opposed such a move.
China had reacted coolly in public to the idea of U.N. involvement, saying sanctions could be counterproductive. But in New York, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said China did not "rule out any option for any constructive proposal or plan" in solving the crisis, although many analysts still expect that China will oppose sanctions. Bolton said the two sides did not discuss that issue.
Correspondent John Pomfret in Beijing and staff writer Peter Slevin in Washington contributed to this report.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19053-2003Jan20.html

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Annals of National Security

The Cold Test

What the Administration knew about Pakistan and the North Korean nuclear program.

By Seymour M. Hersh
Last June, four months before the current crisis over North Korea became public, the Central Intelligence Agency delivered a comprehensive analysis of North Korea's nuclear ambitions to President Bush and his top advisers. The document, known as a National Intelligence Estimate, was classified as Top Secret S.C.I. (for "sensitive compartmented information"), and its distribution within the government was tightly restricted. The C.I.A. report made the case that North Korea had been violating international law—and agreements with South Korea and the United States—by secretly obtaining the means to produce weapons-grade uranium.
The document's most politically sensitive information, however, was about Pakistan. Since 1997, the C.I.A. said, Pakistan had been sharing sophisticated technology, warhead-design information, and weapons-testing data with the Pyongyang regime. Pakistan, one of the Bush Administration's important allies in the war against terrorism, was helping North Korea build the bomb.
In 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which led to the opening of most of its nuclear sites to international inspection. By the early nineteen-nineties, it became evident to American intelligence agencies and international inspectors that the North Koreans were reprocessing more spent fuel than they had declared, and might have separated enough plutonium, a reactor by-product, to fabricate one or two nuclear weapons. The resulting diplomatic crisis was resolved when North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Il, entered into an agreement with the Clinton Administration to stop the nuclear-weapons program in return for economic aid and the construction of two light-water nuclear reactors that, under safeguards, would generate electricity.
Within three years, however, North Korea had begun using a second method to acquire fissile material. This time, instead of using spent fuel, scientists were trying to produce weapons-grade uranium from natural uranium—with Pakistani technology. One American intelligence official, referring to the C.I.A. report, told me, "It points a clear finger at the Pakistanis. The technical stuff is crystal clear—not hedged and not ambivalent." Referring to North Korea's plutonium project in the early nineteen-nineties, he said, "Before, they were sneaking." Now "it's off the wall. We know they can do a lot more and a lot more quickly."
North Korea is economically isolated; one of its main sources of export income is arms sales, and its most sought-after products are missiles. And one of its customers has been Pakistan, which has a nuclear arsenal of its own but needs the missiles to more effectively deliver the warheads to the interior of its rival, India. In 1997, according to the C.I.A. report, Pakistan began paying for missile systems from North Korea in part by sharing its nuclear-weapons secrets. According to the report, Pakistan sent prototypes of high-speed centrifuge machines to North Korea. And

sometime in 2001 North Korean scientists began to enrich uranium in significant quantities. Pakistan also provided data on how to build and test a uranium-triggered nuclear weapon, the C.I.A. report said.

It had taken Pakistan a decade of experimentation, and a substantial financial investment, before it was able to produce reliable centrifuges; with Pakistan's help, the North Koreans had "chopped many years off" the development process, the intelligence official noted. It is not known how many centrifuges are now being operated in North Korea or where the facilities are. (They are assumed to be in underground caves.) The Pakistani centrifuges, the official said, are slim cylinders, roughly six feet in height, that could be shipped "by the hundreds" in cargo planes. But, he added, "all Pakistan would have to do is give the North Koreans the blueprints. They are very sophisticated in their engineering." And with a few thousand centrifuges, he said, "North Korea could have enough fissile material to manufacture two or three warheads a year, with something left over to sell."

A former senior Pakistani official told me that his government's contacts with North Korea increased dramatically in 1997; the Pakistani economy had foundered, and there was "no more money" to pay for North Korean missile support, so the Pakistani government began paying for missiles by providing "some of the know-how and the specifics." Pakistan helped North Korea conduct a series of "cold tests," simulated nuclear explosions, using natural uranium, which are necessary to determine whether a nuclear device will detonate properly. Pakistan also gave the North Korean intelligence service advice on "how to fly under the radar," as the former official put it—that is, how to hide nuclear research from American satellites and U.S. and South Korean intelligence agents.

Whether North Korea had actually begun to build warheads was not known at the time of the 1994 crisis and is still not known today, according to the C.I.A. report. The report, those who have read it say, included separate and contradictory estimates from the C.I.A., the Pentagon, the State Department, and the Department of Energy regarding the number of warheads that North Korea might have been capable of making, and provided no consensus on whether or not the Pyongyang regime is actually producing them.

Over the years, there have been sporadic reports of North Korea's contacts with Pakistan, most of them concerning missile sales. Much less has been known about nuclear ties. In the past decade, American intelligence tracked at least thirteen visits to North Korea made by A. Q. Khan, who was then the director of a Pakistani weapons-research laboratory, and who is known as the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb. This October, after news of the uranium program came out, the Times ran a story suggesting that Pakistan was a possible supplier of centrifuges to North Korea. General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's leader, attacked the account as "absolutely baseless," and added, "There is no such thing as collaboration with North Korea in the nuclear area." The White House appeared to take the Musharraf statement at face value. In November, Secretary of State Colin Powell told reporters he had been assured by Musharraf that Pakistan was not currently engaging in any nuclear transactions with North Korea. "I have made clear to him that any . . . contact between Pakistan and North Korea we believe would be improper, inappropriate, and would have consequences," Powell said. "President Musharraf understands the seriousness of the issue." After that, Pakistan quickly faded from press coverage of the North Korea story.

The Bush Administration may have few good options with regard to Pakistan, given the country's role in the war on terror. Within two weeks of September 11th, Bush lifted the sanctions that had been imposed on Pakistan because of its nuclear-weapons activities. In the view of American disarmament experts, the sanctions had in any case failed to deal with one troubling issue: the close ties between some scientists working for the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and radical Islamic groups. "There is an awful lot of Al Qaeda sympathy within Pakistan's nuclear program," an intelligence official told me. One American nonproliferation expert said, "Right now, the most dangerous country in the world is Pakistan. If we're incinerated next week, it'll be because of H.E.U."—highly enriched uranium—"that was given to Al Qaeda by Pakistan."

Pakistan's relative poverty could pose additional risks. In early January, a Web-based Pakistani-exile newspaper opposed to the Musharraf government reported that, in the past six years, nine nuclear scientists had emigrated from Pakistan—apparently in search of better pay—and could not be located.

An American intelligence official I spoke with called Pakistan's behavior the "worst nightmare" of the international arms-control community: a Third World country becoming an instrument of proliferation. "The West's primary control of nuclear proliferation was based on technology denial and diplomacy," the official said. "Our fear was, first, that a Third World country would develop nuclear weapons indigenously; and, second, that it would then provide the technology to other countries. This is profound. It changes the world." Pakistan's nuclear program flourished in the nineteen-eighties, at a time when its military and intelligence forces were working closely with the United States to repel the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The official said, "The transfer of enrichment technology by Pakistan is a direct outgrowth of the failure of the United States to deal with the Pakistani program when we could have done so. We've lost control."

The C.I.A. report remained unpublicized throughout the summer and early fall, as the Administration concentrated on laying the groundwork for a war with Iraq. Many officials in the Administration's own arms-control offices were

unaware of the report. "It was held very tightly," an official told me. "Compartmentalization is used to protect sensitive sources who can get killed if their information is made known, but it's also used for controlling sensitive information for political reasons."

One American nonproliferation expert said that, given the findings in the June report, he was dismayed that the Administration had not made the information available. "It's important to convey to the American people that the North Korean situation presented us with an enormous military and political crisis," he said. "This goes to the heart of North Asian security, to the future of Japan and South Korea, and to the future of the broader issue of nonproliferation."

A Japanese diplomat who has been closely involved in Korean affairs defended the Bush Administration's delay in publicly dealing with the crisis. Referring to the report, he said, "If the intelligence assessment was correct, you have to think of the implications. Disclosure of information is not always instant. You need some time to assess the content." He added, "To have a dialogue, you really have to find the right time and the right conditions. So far, President Bush has done the right thing, from our perspective." (The White House and the C.I.A. did not respond to requests for comment.)

President Bush's contempt for the North Korean government is well known, and makes the White House's failure to publicize the C.I.A. report or act on it all the more puzzling. In his State of the Union address in January of last year, Bush cited North Korea, along with Iraq and Iran, as part of the "axis of evil." Bob Woodward, in "Bush at War," his book about the Administration's response to September 11th, recalls an interview at the President's Texas ranch in August: " 'I loathe Kim Jong Il!' Bush shouted, waving his finger in the air. 'I've got a visceral reaction to this guy, because he is starving his people.' " Woodward wrote that the President had become so emotional while speaking about Kim Jong Il that "I thought he might jump up."

The Bush Administration was put on notice about North Korea even before it received the C.I.A. report. In January of last year, John Bolton, the Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control, declared that North Korea had a covert nuclear-weapons program and was in violation of the nonproliferation treaty. In February, the President was urged by three members of Congress to withhold support for the two reactors promised to North Korea, on the ground that the Pyongyang government was said to be operating a secret processing site "for the enrichment of uranium." In May, Bolton again accused North Korea of failing to coöperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the group responsible for monitoring treaty compliance. Nevertheless, on July 5th the President's national-security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, who presumably had received the C.I.A. report weeks earlier, made it clear in a letter to the congressmen that the Bush Administration would continue providing North Korea with shipments of heavy fuel oil and nuclear technology for the two promised energy-generating reactors.

The Administration's fitful North Korea policy, with its mixture of anger and seeming complacency, is in many ways a consequence of its unrelenting focus on Iraq. Late last year, the White House released a national-security-strategy paper authorizing the military "to detect and destroy an adversary's WMD assets"—weapons of mass destruction—"before these weapons are used." The document argued that the armed forces "must have the capability to defend against WMD-armed adversaries . . . because deterrence may not succeed." Logically, the new strategy should have applied first to North Korea, whose nuclear-weapons program remains far more advanced than Iraq's. The Administration's goal, however, was to mobilize public opinion for an invasion of Iraq. One American intelligence official told me, "The Bush doctrine says MAD"—mutual assured destruction—"will not work for these rogue nations, and therefore we have to preëmpt if negotiations don't work. And the Bush people knew that the North Koreans had already reinvigorated their programs and were more dangerous than Iraq. But they didn't tell anyone. They have bankrupted their own policy—thus far—by not doing what their doctrine calls for."

Iraq's military capacity has been vitiated by its defeat in the Gulf War and years of inspections, but North Korea is one of the most militarized nations in the world, with more than forty per cent of its population under arms. Its artillery is especially fearsome: more than ten thousand guns, along with twenty-five hundred rocket launchers capable of launching five hundred thousand shells an hour, are positioned within range of Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The Pentagon has estimated that all-out war would result in more than a million military and civilian casualties, including as many as a hundred thousand Americans killed. A Clinton Administration official recalled attending a congressional briefing in the mid-nineties at which Army General Gary Luck, the commander of U.S. forces in Korea, laconically said, "Senator, I could win this one for you—but not right away."

In early October, James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, flew to Pyongyang with a large entourage for a showdown over the uranium-enrichment program. The agenda was, inevitably, shaped by officials' awareness of the President's strong personal views. "There was a huge fight over whether to give the North Koreans an ultimatum or to negotiate," one American expert on Korea told me. "Which is the same fight they're having now." Kelly was authorized to tell the Koreans that the U.S. had learned about the illicit uranium program, but his careful instructions left him no room to negotiate. His scripted message was blunt: North Korea

must stop the program before any negotiations could take place. "This is a sad tale of bureaucracy," another American expert said. "The script Kelly had was written in the N.S.C."—the National Security Council—"by hard-liners. I don't think the President wanted a crisis at this time." The C.I.A. report had predicted that North Korea, if confronted with the evidence, would not risk an open break with the 1994 agreement and would do nothing to violate the nonproliferation treaty. "It was dead wrong," an intelligence officer told me. "I hope there are other people in the agency who understand the North Koreans better than the people who wrote this."

"The Koreans were stunned," a Japanese diplomat who spoke to some of the participants told me. "They didn't know that the U.S. knew what it knew." After an all-night caucus in Pyongyang, Kang Suk Ju, the First Vice Foreign Minister of North Korea, seemed to confirm the charge when he responded by insisting upon his nation's right to develop nuclear weapons. What he didn't talk about was whether it actually had any. Kang Suk Ju also accused the United States, the Japanese diplomat said, of "threatening North Korea's survival." Kang then produced a list of the United States' alleged failures to meet its own obligations under the 1994 agreement, and offered to shut down the enrichment program in return for an American promise not to attack and a commitment to normalize relations. Kelly, constrained by his instructions, could only re-state his brief: the North Koreans must act first. The impasse was on.

But, as with the June C.I.A. report, the Administration kept quiet about the Pyongyang admission. It did not inform the public until October 16th, five days after Congress voted to authorize military force against Iraq. Even then, according to Administration sources quoted in the Washington Post, the Administration went public only after learning that the North Korean admission—with obvious implications for the debate on Iraq—was being leaked to the press. On the CBS program "Face the Nation" on October 20th, Condoleezza Rice denied that news of the Kelly meeting had been deliberately withheld until after the vote. President Bush, she said, simply hadn't been presented with options until October 15th. "What was surprising to us was not that there was a program," Rice said. "What was surprising to us was that the North Koreans admitted there was a program."

"Did we want them to deny it?" a former American intelligence expert on North Korea asked me afterward. He said, "I could never understand what was going on with the North Korea policy." Referring to relations between the intelligence service and the Bush Administration, he said, "We couldn't get people's attention, and, even if we could, they never had a sensible approach. The Administration was deeply, viciously ideological." It was contemptuous not only of the Pyongyang government but of earlier efforts by the Clinton White House to address the problem of nuclear proliferation—a problem that could only get worse if Washington ignored it. The former intelligence official told me, "When it came time to confront North Korea, we had no plan, no contact—nothing to negotiate with. You have to be in constant diplomatic contact, so you can engage and be in the strongest position to solve the problem. But we let it all fall apart."

The former intelligence official added, referring to the confrontation in North Korea in October, "The Kelly meeting and the subsequent American statement have tipped the balance in Pyongyang. The North Koreans were already terrifically suspicious of the United States. They saw the Kelly message as 'When you fix this, get back to us.' They were very angry. That, plus the fact that they feel they are next in line after Iraq, made them believe they had to act very quickly to protect themselves."

The result was that in October, as in June, the Administration had no option except to deny that there was a crisis. When the first published reports of the Kelly meeting appeared, a White House spokesman said that the President found it to be "troubling, sobering news." Rice repeatedly emphasized that North Korea and Iraq were separate cases. "Saddam Hussein is in a category by himself," Rice said on ABC's "Nightline." One arms-control official told me, "The White House didn't want to deal with a second crisis."

In the following months, the American policy alternated between tough talk in public—vows that the Administration wouldn't be "blackmailed," or even meet with North Korean leaders—and private efforts, through third parties, to open an indirect line of communication with Pyongyang. North Korea, meanwhile, expelled international inspectors, renounced the nonproliferation treaty, and threatened to once again begin reprocessing spent nuclear fuel—all the while insisting on direct talks with the Bush Administration.

One Clinton Administration official who was involved in the 1994 talks with Kim Jong Il acknowledged that he felt deeply disappointed by the North Korean actions. "The deal was that we'd give them two reactors and they, in turn, have to knock off this shit," he said. "They've got something going, and it's in violation of the deal." Nonetheless, the official said, the Bush Administration "has got to talk to Kim Jong Il." Despite the breakdown of the 1994 agreement, and despite the evidence of cheating, the C.I.A. report depicted the agreement as a success insofar as over the past eight years it had prevented North Korea from building warheads—as many as a hundred, according to some estimates.

Last week, President Bush gave in to what many of his advisers saw as the inevitable and agreed to consider renewed American aid in return for a commitment by North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. However, the White House was still resisting direct negotiations with the Kim Jong Il government.
In a speech in June, Robert Gallucci, a diplomat who was put in charge of negotiating the 1994 agreement with Pyongyang, and who is now dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, recalled that Bush's first approach to North Korea had been to make it "a poster child" for the Administration's arguments for a missile-defense system. "This was the cutting edge of the threat against which we were planning and shaping our defense," he said. "There was a belief that North Korea was not to be dealt with by negotiation.
"But then September 11th happened, and September 11th meant that national missile defense could not defend America, because the threat was going to come not from missiles but from a hundred other ways as well," he said. "And so we've come full circle. . . . North Korea and other rogue states who threaten us with weapons of mass destruction threaten not only because they themselves might not be deterrable but because they may transfer this capability to those who can't be deterred or defended against."
One American intelligence official who has attended recent White House meetings cautioned against relying on the day-to-day Administration statements that emphasize a quick settlement of the dispute. The public talk of compromise is being matched by much private talk of high-level vindication. "Bush and Cheney want that guy's head"—Kim Jong Il's—"on a platter. Don't be distracted by all this talk about negotiations. There will be negotiations, but they have a plan, and they are going to get this guy after Iraq. He's their version of Hitler."
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Atlanta Journal-Constitution
January 21, 2003

Troops In Kuwait Get Shots To Fight Smallpox

By Ron Martz, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
CAMP DOHA, Kuwait -- The time has come for American troops here to start rolling up their sleeves and gritting their teeth.
Military officials said over the weekend that a campaign is under way to inoculate the more than 17,000 troops in Kuwait. The goal is to protect them against the virus, should Iraq use it as a biological weapon.
The military is also preparing enough vaccine for the tens of thousands of additional troops expected to arrive here as part of the United States military buildup.
The timetable for the vaccinations is "immediately, if not sooner," said Col. Larry Godfrey, smallpox vaccination program director for U.S. forces in the Middle East and Southwest Asia.
Godfrey, also the command surgeon for 3rd Army, based at Fort McPherson in Atlanta, said the military has "more than enough" vaccine on hand to fulfill the order by President Bush to protect American forces.
The vaccination program started here Dec. 31, with military health care providers first to receive the inoculations. They are now preparing to vaccinate the remainder of the troops.
Several hundred troops had been vaccinated as of Monday, said Godfrey, but that number is expected to increase rapidly over the next few weeks. "As we speak, units are putting the final touches on individual vaccination plans," he said.
There have been only a few minor side effects among those vaccinated, he said -- sore arms or swelling at the site of the inoculation.
Godfrey said the military will keep a close watch for side effects. But screening those who get the shots should keep problems to a minimum. Troops with a history of eczema or dermatitis will be excused from getting the vaccine, because it could potentially worsen those conditions.
Godfrey said most of the research on the side effects of smallpox vaccinations is several decades old, since the last known naturally occurring case was in Somalia in 1977. But research indicates that anywhere from 15 to 52 of every 1,000 people vaccinated will have some side effects. One or two out of every 1 million could die.
That's compared to the 30 percent death rate for those who contract the disease, with the remaining 70 percent suffering possible disfiguring scars or blindness, he said.
"Only a fraction of a percentage has a chance of a reaction to the vaccine, so that balances out when you look at the death rate if you actually get the disease," he said.

It is not known if Iraq has ever had access to the smallpox virus. Russia and the United States are the only nations with declared stocks of the virus, but American officials worry that a security breach in Russia could have provided Iraq with a sample.
But military officials have decided preventive measures are necessary.
Despite the chance of side effects, Godfrey said, troops have been more eager to get the smallpox vaccinations than anthrax inoculations. Many military personnel have objected to the anthrax vaccines, citing widespread reports of adverse reactions.
Providing preventive measures could be a key to keeping Bush's plans for the region and Iraq on track.
"An outbreak of smallpox," Godfrey said, "would paralyze military operations."
http://www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/news/0103/21smallpox.html

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Washington Post
January 20, 2003
Pg. 1

Iraq Reveals 4 More Empty Warheads

Chief Inspector Warns Baghdad It Must Increase Cooperation With U.N.

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Foreign Service
BAGHDAD, Iraq, Jan. 19 -- Iraqi officials told chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix today they have found four more empty chemical warheads, Blix said after holding meetings here to warn President Saddam Hussein's government that "time is running out" for it to increase its cooperation with inspectors.
The disclosure of the four warheads with internal plastic sleeves, designed to fit atop 122mm rockets and disperse deadly sarin gas, has both encouraged and concerned Blix, who said he welcomed efforts by Iraq to search for the munitions and to admit their existence but questioned whether the finding could be the "tip of an iceberg" of undeclared weapons.
On Thursday, inspectors visiting an army munitions depot southwest of Baghdad discovered a cache of a dozen empty chemical warheads of the same specification that were not listed in a December weapons declaration Iraq pledged was complete and accurate.
Blix said Iraqi officials insisted the 16 empty warheads were "isolated, overlooked items," but that they said they would scour the country for other such devices, which Iraq is prohibited from possessing under various U.N. Security Council resolutions mandating the nation's disarmament.
"They said they were surprised by what they had found, and they said they wanted to make sure they found all of them in the country," he said. "We look forward to that."
He said Iraqi officials also provided him with three documents that U.N. inspectors had requested more than four years ago. He did not describe the contents or the size of the documents.
Although Blix said he regards the disclosure of the warheads and the handing over of the documents as positive steps toward improving cooperation, he warned that Iraq still needs to make fundamental changes in the way it is dealing with the inspections process. He said he pressed Iraqi officials to turn over more information related to past weapons programs, encourage scientists to consent to private interviews with inspectors and allow high-altitude U-2 surveillance aircraft to fly over the country.
"We do not think that war is inevitable," Blix said as he arrived here with Mohamed ElBaradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N.-chartered nuclear watchdog. "We think that the inspection process that we are conducting is the peaceful alternative."
But he said the process "requires a very active Iraqi cooperation."
Blix, director of the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, is scheduled to present a progress report with ElBaradei on Iraq's compliance with the inspections to the U.N. Security Council on Jan. 27. U.N. officials said Blix and ElBaradei today told senior Iraqi officials, including Foreign Minister Naji Sabri and presidential science adviser Gen. Amir Saadi, that Iraq's receptiveness to their demands would influence the tenor of the report.
After the meeting, ElBaradei said he felt that he and Blix were "making some progress."
At present, U.N. officials said, the report probably will acknowledge that inspectors have not found conclusive evidence that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction, but it will upbraid Iraq for failing to fully cooperate with the inspectors and will raise questions about information Iraq has refused to disclose.

The report almost certainly will play a crucial role in determining whether Security Council members decide to pass a resolution authorizing the use of military force to topple Hussein and disarm Iraq. A report critical of Iraq also could be seized upon by the Bush administration, which has deployed tens of thousands of troops to the Persian Gulf region, as a justification for unilateral military action on the grounds that the resolution that authorized the inspections calls for "serious consequences" if Iraq fails to comply.

"The message Hans Blix and I are trying to convey as forcefully as possible is that time is running out," ElBaradei said in an interview. "We need to see quick progress on as many of the issues as possible."

For Blix and ElBaradei, the two most important issues appear to be the hand-over of more documents and interviews with scientists.

The two men, who contend that Iraq's 12,000-page weapons declaration is riddled with omissions, have pressed Iraqi officials to provide a fuller accounting of past and current weapons programs, particularly evidence to support Iraq's claims that its stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons have been destroyed. U.S. and U.N. officials have long been skeptical of Iraq's assertion and have insisted on seeing proof that Iraq eliminated tons of bacteriological and nerve agents it covertly produced and weaponized in the 1980s.

Although Iraq has insisted that it has turned over all relevant documents, the discovery last week of about 3,000 pages of material related to uranium enrichment in the home of a physicist has added to concerns that Iraq may be holding back information.

"We told them, 'Do not adopt a legalistic approach. You know what is expected of you,' " ElBaradei said. Blix said the discovery of the documents likely will lead to further inspections of private homes and efforts to question scientists.

The inspectors want to be able to interview Iraqi scientists in private, away from government minders who, the inspectors fear, might discourage the scientists from speaking freely. Although Iraqi officials have said the country's scientists are free to choose how they want to be questioned, U.N. officials contend that the Iraqi government has not done enough to encourage the scientists to talk and instead has effectively dissuaded them from consenting to private interviews.

Over the past few days, the inspectors have asked the government to arrange private interviews with six scientists, but all have said they would not speak without Iraqi officials present.

"If you have nothing to hide, you should tell your people to go and tell your story without any form of intimidation," ElBaradei said.

Iraqi officials bristle at suggestions that they have not been cooperative enough with the inspectors. They note that the inspectors have not been turned away from any sites -- a claim with which the inspectors concur -- and they contend they are following the wording of the resolution on the issue of interviews.

"We have opened all of our laboratories and our military bases and everywhere else the inspectors want to search. We are allowing the inspectors to interview whoever they want," a senior Iraqi official said today. "We're doing everything they asked us to do."

But ElBaradei said Iraq needs "to have a change of heart. They have to be seen not as a country dragged to comply but eager to comply."

Also today, the U.S. Central Command said warplanes participating in a U.S.-British coalition to enforce a "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq struck eight unmanned Iraqi communications relay stations.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A15557-2003Jan19.html

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Philadelphia Inquirer
January 20, 2003

Kuwait: Iraqi Spy Was To Use Poison

By Drew Brown, Knight Ridder News Service

KUWAIT CITY - U.S. military officials in Kuwait were reviewing security procedures yesterday after an accused Iraqi spy allegedly told Kuwaiti authorities that he planned to kill U.S. troops by poisoning their food.

Military officials would not comment directly on the report, which was first published Saturday in a leading Arabic newspaper. But they said the threat would be scrutinized and appropriate measures taken.

"There are threats out there, and we continually assess those threats and take steps to mitigate the risks to our forces in the region," said Col. Rick Thomas, a U.S. military spokesman.

The alleged spy, Sgt. Mohammed Hamad Fahd al-Juwayed, 40, a food supervisor in the Kuwaiti National Guard, also planned to help Iraqi agents assassinate leading political figures and blow up oil and power facilities, said a Kuwaiti government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.
U.S. Embassy spokesman John Moran said the arrest "shows that Saddam Hussein continues to harbor aggressive intentions towards Kuwait."
The story was reprinted yesterday in English-language papers. The Kuwaiti official confirmed its accuracy. "They did not catch him with any poison, but he admitted during interrogation that he planned to poison the American troops who are now in Kuwait," the official said.
The arrest was announced Friday, but the official said police took Juwayed into custody about 10 days ago after watching him for more than a year.
The official said the alleged spy met several times in neighboring Jordan with a Yemeni and a Syrian who were working for Iraqi intelligence. The official said Kuwait has asked Jordan for help in arresting the men, whose identities remain unclear.
Iraq denied any link to Juwayed and said the allegation was designed to damage its ties with other states in the region.
The alleged plot's discovery comes as U.S. troops pour into the Persian Gulf for a possible U.S.-led attack on Iraq, which Washington accuses of developing weapons of mass destruction. There are more than 17,000 U.S. troops in Kuwait and more than 60,000 in the Persian Gulf.
About 250 U.S. soldiers became sick last month at a camp south of Kuwait City in an incident that the military concluded was an isolated salmonella outbreak caused by poor sanitary conditions.
Food supplies and other necessities for U.S. forces are overseen by a private contractor, Combat Support Associates. Company officials contacted at Kuwait's Camp Doha yesterday declined to discuss the new report.
http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/4986460.htm

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Baltimore Sun
January 20, 2003

A Military Base's Last Line Of Toxic Defense: Bluegills

Aberdeen: The fish, which test water quality, are among the many tools - high- and low-tech - used to ensure that the post's hazards are contained.

By Ariel Sabar, Sun Staff

Last of two parts

EDGEWOOD - In a small laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Ground, eight bluegills put their tails on the line every day in the name of clean water. The fish swim in tanks of treated water piped from beneath the Army base's most toxic dump, a melange of decaying chemical warfare agents such as napalm, cyanide and sarin.
If electrodes pasted to the tanks detect an unusual wriggle or cough, a computer alerts engineers that toxins may be getting past a multimillion-dollar water treatment system. Enough sick fish, and the engineers investigate. Enough dead fish, and they shut off the discharge into the Gunpowder River.
This is how quality control works at the filthiest dump on one of the nation's most polluted military bases.
The $49.6 billion cleanup of polluted defense sites in the United States has plenty of high-tech gear at its disposal, from cesium-vapor magnetometers to infrared air monitors and ground-penetrating radar. But the decision to enlist pond fish in the war on toxic waste reflects the limits of even the most advanced technology in cleanups as complex as Aberdeen's.
In the ground water beneath the dump, the soup of chemicals is so exotic that environmental scientists don't entirely trust the computer sensors that test treated water for purity. So the fish act as sentinels - like the canaries whose deaths once signaled poisonous gas in coal mines.
"The philosophy of the system," says Tommy R. Shedd, the Army research biologist who designed it, "is that you can integrate it into a very, very complex dirty world."
The grande dame of Maryland military bases, spanning some 72,500 acres between the Susquehanna and Gunpowder rivers, Aberdeen is the third most expensive base cleanup in the nation and perhaps its most complex.
In one government report, the list of pollutants in the soil and ground water runs five pages long - in small type. In buildings there, many now crumbling from disuse, scientists experimented with chemicals designed to sicken and

kill. And on the firing ranges, soldiers tested small arms, took tanks for their first spin and learned to launch explosives filled with phosgene and mustard agent.

The base's environmental woes are so imposing that when a boater disappeared into the Gunpowder River in 2001, rescue crews refused to send in divers because of the risk of encountering unexploded artillery shells.

The Pentagon estimates it will cost $741 million to rid the base of toxins. And when it's all over, by the 2030s at the earliest, the cleanup will have spanned more than a half-century.

"Aberdeen has been a challenge because of the amount of contamination," says Paul Leonard, the chief regulator of federal facilities at the regional headquarters of the Environmental Protection Agency in Philadelphia. "Some of the munitions testing and some of the chemicals used in those operations were not traditionally the chemicals we knew about."

The base opened in 1917, when World War I convinced the Army that it needed a place to test artillery.

Aberdeen was close enough to shipping centers for supplies to move in and out, but far enough - at the time - from neighborhoods that the year-round testing wouldn't endanger humans or arouse opposition.

But it took an act of Congress and two presidential proclamations to sweep 3,000 people and 12,000 head of livestock off farms to make way for what became the nation's largest test site for guns, tanks and ammunition. In its heyday, the 1940s, the base newspaper was called The Flaming Bomb.

In 1971, Aberdeen Proving Ground expanded, absorbing its neighbor, the Edgewood Arsenal, the military's center for chemical weapons research and training.

Over the years, concern for the air, soil and water took a backseat to fine-tuning weapons for combat in two world wars, Korea and Vietnam.

As recently as the 1970s, workers were disposing of mustard agent, tear gas, nerve agents and white phosphorus by throwing the substances into long trenches and setting them on fire.

In the late 1980s, three senior managers at a chemical weapons research plant were convicted of felony violations of hazardous-waste laws, for dumping dangerous chemicals. "The allegations in this indictment reflect the absolute disregard that the Army had for federal and state laws governing hazardous waste," Breckinridge L. Willcox, then U.S. attorney for Maryland, said at the time.

In 1994, state and federal regulators fined the base $140,000 for toxic waste violations, including the storage of more than 3,000 gallons of white phosphorus for 10 years, rather than the 90 days allowed.

It wasn't until Congress passed stringent cleanup laws in the 1980s that the military undertook its first systematic survey of Aberdeen's environmental problems. In some places, tests of ground water and soil found concentrations of toxins so high that scientists were measuring them in parts per 100, rather than the standard environmental yardstick of parts per billion.

The results were worrisome enough that by 1990 the EPA had placed the entire Edgewood area and parts of the Aberdeen area on its Superfund list of high-priority cleanups.

Over the past two decades, a small army of federal agencies has tried to map and categorize Aberdeen's pollution. Their work fills phonebook-thick volumes covering two walls in one engineer's office. Yet despite this air of thoroughness, the base's environmental ills can at times resemble a mythical hydra: When one head is cut off, two appear in its place.

In 1997, a chance brush fire revealed a major dump that two decades of environmental surveys had missed. What had looked like a tranquil field of marsh reeds by the Gunpowder River became a $5 million toxic waste cleanup.

"When you go down to a site many many times and you look at this beautiful phragmites marsh and the next day the phragmites is gone and you see these whole piles of concrete and metal and demilled munitions, it is definitely a shock," recalls Cindy C. Powels, an environmental engineer at the base since 1981. "We had to rethink everything."

A more alarming discovery came last year, when perchlorate, a rocket fuel component linked to thyroid disorders, was found in the city of Aberdeen's tap water. City officials shut down one well and halved production at three others.

In neighborhoods near the base, the shock once triggered by such discoveries has given way to cynicism. "The attitude is, 'Here we go again,'" says Ruth Ann Young, a retired school guidance counselor and member of a watchdog group called the Aberdeen Proving Ground Superfund Citizens Coalition.

The O-Field

The toxic dump patrolled by the bluegills is known simply as O-Field.

To get there, John T. Paul Jr., the base's environmental risk manager, shows his ID at two guardhouses, signs his name and employee number in a log, and radios ahead to a safety office for permission to proceed.

A few minutes later, he parks his van and gestures over his left shoulder at a flat rectangle of gravel hemmed by a low chain-link fence: O-Field. "If it wasn't the Army's worst environmental dump," Paul says warily, "it was right up there."

In the 1940s and early 1950s, workers packed the 5-acre lot with the base's most noxious refuse: lethal nerve agents, tear gas, explosives, fuels, cyanide, unexploded shells, chemical weapons.
In the 1960s, freak underground explosions sent pieces of O-Field flying into nearby Watson Creek. An Army report later forecast one to three "explosive events" at O-Field every decade.
Seven years ago, when the Army finally decided to blanket the dump with a protective sand cap, it played it safe and had remote-controlled robots do the work. A layer of gravel was spread on top of the cap, to absorb the impact of any explosions. A grid of sprinkler pipes fans out over the gravel, to spray down toxic clouds.
Though there have been no explosions or gas releases at O-Field since the cap, chemicals have been seeping into the ground water.
A ring of wells draws the ground water into the nearby treatment system, where the bluegills form the last line of defense before a pipe shoots the treated water into the Gunpowder River.

'Rake and scrape'

Some of the most dangerous cleanup work at Aberdeen falls to the likes of Billy Sanders, an Army explosives specialist with a connoisseur's eye for vintage ordnance.
Sanders is leading a cleanup of a sprawling firing range on the banks of Lauderick Creek.
He takes a photo each time his workers dig up a round of buried ammunition. More than 170 pictures now fill an album he calls "our own little scrapbook."
"We do have some nice looking rounds in here," he says one afternoon, flipping through the pages until he finds to a photo of a dented shell covered in rust. "That's a pretty nice 4.2-inch mortar there."
From 1920 to 1951, soldiers at the Army's chemical school trooped out to the range to fire shells of mustard agent, phosgene and other chemical agents. The unexploded projectiles now lie rusting beneath the creek's banks.
Since June 2001, the lives of Sanders' workers have revolved around a single question: Are the metal objects in the soil beneath their feet chemical shells, or just spoons, soup cans or other harmless scrap?
To find out, they shuffle through the fall leaves waving metal detectors over the moist soil. When the detectors whine, they know there is metal underfoot. They sink small yellow flags in the earth to mark these "magnetic anomalies."
Then the digging begins. It's called "rake and scrape," and is in many ways no more sophisticated than it sounds.
On this day, two workers in camouflage uniforms draw a rake over the springy soil above one "anomaly."
The work would resemble a version of Russian roulette were it not for the painstaking safeguards against chance detonations. Around the site, a half-dozen green tanks that fought oil fires in the Persian Gulf war stand ready to release 250 gallons of pressurized water in the event of a chemical explosion.
The slightest trace of gas will trip sensors, which in turn ring an alarm at the cleanup's command post.
The command post, a few hundred yards away, is a small trailer crammed with computers. Inside, a man tugs on a joystick to aim a surveillance camera at workers prodding the unknown piece of metal. He makes sure workers follow safety rules. He also watches for accidents so severe that the injured would be unable to call for help.
Two seats down, Dawn Pisarski, a civil engineer with the Army corps, studies a computer screen showing how real-time wind and weather conditions would disperse a chemical cloud should the worst happen.
This afternoon, the would-be plume forms an ellipse veering southeast from the dig site. In an explosion, many people inside the ellipse would probably die.
"If the plume goes over the school," says Pisarski, referring to a group of three schools nearby, "I won't let them dig."
But the sun is shining today, and the wind a mere caress. So the two men in camouflage keep raking. Then rake's teeth strike metal. It is with a note of disappointment that one of them men announces his find. "A soda can," he says.
Not every day is as dull.
In late October, crews dug away soil and found an anti-tank mine the size of a birthday cake. It was an "alligator," a booby-trapped mine that looked rigged to blow at the slightest touch. Workers rolled out X-ray machines, and summoned firefighters and emergency decontamination crews.
"None of the records indicated that this type of training had been done out there," Sanders recalls. "Even the experts were surprised by the booby trap."
To everyone's relief, the mine was a dud. "Fortunately," Sanders says, smiling, "it was a practice mine."
Sun staff researcher Jean Packard contributed to this article.
http://www.sunspot.net/bal-te.md.aberdeen20jan20.story

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New York Times
January 19, 2003

Nuclear War Strategists Rethink The Unthinkable

By Serge Schmemann

To a world conditioned by the cold war to think of a nuclear exchange as Armageddon, it may appear somewhat comforting that the minor powers that have acquired (or may have acquired) the Bomb — India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel — at least don't have enough Bombs to wipe out the world.

Yet among the professionals whose job it is to contemplate the actual use of these things, the initial complacency that came with the end of the United States-Soviet arms race has been shaken by the notion that even the relatively minuscule arsenals of the new generation of nuclear powers may pose a very serious threat, although of a very different kind.

With North Korea's aggressive rejection of any restrictions on its nuclear programs, the old war-gamers are swarming back to their computers.

For most of them, the best area to look at is South Asia, where India and Pakistan both have nuclear weapons that could easily be used against each other. Even the fact that a nuclear exchange between them would not end the world, the professionals argue, could undermine the taboo on nuclear weapons that the threat of apocalypse engendered.

"This was probably the most important taboo in the history of warfare," said Michael Krepon, the president of the Henry L. Stimson Center, which studies ways of reducing military threats. "If President Truman or President Eisenhower had used nuclear weapons in the Korean War, and Lord knows they got that advice, the whole subsequent history of warfare and the rules of warfare would have been changed."

The argument is not another manifestation of the curious nostalgia that has cropped up for the simplicities of the cold war. Lest anyone forget, that was a time when legions of very serious people in the United States and the Soviet Union spent their time devising ways to ensure that whoever shot first would die second. The doctrine was called MAD "mutual assured destruction" — and it came with a package of equally cute ideas like "use 'em or lose 'em" (unleash your nukes if you think they might be destroyed) — or Richard M. Nixon's "madman theory," which consisted of projecting an image of himself as dangerously unpredictable.

The real name of the game, of course, was deterrence. If judged by the fact that Earth is still under us, it worked. Not only was there no nuclear exchange, but over time the very notion of one became unthinkable, and the world came to think of nuclear attacks as taboo. "The devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war" was the guiding thought, and the opening line, of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty drafted at the United Nations in the 1960's.

The treaty envisioned limiting nuclear arsenals to the acknowledged powers — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China. Israel covered its program by not acknowledging it, and Iraq, Iran and North Korea were singled out as threats to be monitored. But it was only with the multiple nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998 that the notion of a new nuclear threat struck home. And now North Korea has intensified the concern.

The doomsday the old war-gamers now envision, however, is not the rain of missiles with massive payloads crisscrossing over a dying world. Rather it is a local nuclear exchange with an impact more like the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

"The general assumption that the first nuclear war will be an end-of-the-world event is much less likely with the countries that are likely to do it," said Richard K. Betts, a professor of political science at Columbia. "But once they use their nuclear weapons, everything comes up for grabs."

One possibility is that the world would be so horrified that it would redouble efforts at nuclear disarmament. The other, Mr. Betts said, was that a lot of countries would conclude that there is no reason they shouldn't have their own nukes.

"Twenty years ago who would predict that Iraq and North Korea would be the biggest problem?" Mr. Betts said. "The next might also be those with the biggest security problems and the fewest allies, or rising powers which want to be taken seriously. Taiwan? South Korea? Japan? Egypt? Syria? Nigeria?" Some of these already have the know-how or plutonium to develop nuclear weapons quickly, as do many European or former Soviet states.

But all this, the experts acknowledge, is speculation. Whatever gaming tools they developed in the cold war are proving largely useless.

"During the past several years I have spent untold hours in conversation with South Asian planners, and it is clear that they have embarked down the same path as the cold war rivals in all areas of doomsday planning," said Bruce G. Blair, president of the Center for Defense Information. "But they are still sorting out virtually all of the key

issues, particularly the vexing challenge of ensuring tight central control over nuclear forces that may be placed on launch-ready alert during peacetime or a crisis. The acute dangers of a breakdown of control or faulty intelligence leading to a mistaken or unauthorized launch are far from solved."

While the Soviet-American relationship was based on a mutual interest in avoiding conflict, with half a world between them and a network of detectors in place, India and Pakistan are locked in a territorial dispute over Kashmir, Pakistan's regime is shaky, and the two are cheek-by-jowl geographically, leaving scant seconds to distinguish between an accident and an attack.

And with limited arsenals to use or lose, any real or suspected attack could escalate instantly into a massive exchange. A scenario Mr. Blair compiled from existing studies began with Pakistan dropping a Hiroshima-size bomb on Indian troops massing on its border, and ended with an exchange of nuclear bombs against Islamabad and New Delhi. The simulation left about 420,000 Pakistanis and 600,000 Indians dead, Mr. Blair said, but even that presumed a level of decision-making and intelligence that simply was not there.

North Korea is even less predictable. "I don't view the North Korean government as being deeply irrational, but as deeply desperate," said Scott D. Sagan, a co-director of the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford. If the regime felt itself in mortal danger, he said, it might not hesitate to detonate a nuclear device — on an American base, on Seoul or even on Tokyo. Mr. Blair said that a single 15-kiloton bomb over Seoul could leave 150,000 dead and tens of thousands wounded.

Then, after the dust and radioactivity settled, the world and especially the reigning nuclear powers would take stock. "If the government that ordered the initial use of the nuclear weapons was severely punished, if its leaders were tried as war criminals, if its society was devastated by retaliation, then I think the use of nuclear weapons would appear foolish, and many potential proliferators would be cautioned," Mr. Sagan said. "But if it proved militarily effective and not so devastating societally, they might conclude it's useful."

For more than half a century, the United States and the Soviet Union wrestled with the same problem, and it was only when they raised the bar to an apocalyptic level that they succeeded in rendering nuclear weapons unthinkable. But when the old war-gamers dusted off their templates for the new nuclear threats, they found them useless. All they could predict with any certainty, Mr. Blair said, "was no one can claim to know how a war for which history has thankfully provided no experience is going to unfold, and with what consequences."

It doesn't seem like much to go on. But even if uncertainty does not have quite the deterrent power of mutual destruction, it has so far been enough for Washington to do everything in its power to keep India and Pakistan apart, and to try to keep the North Koreans calm.

http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/19/weekinreview/19SCHM.html

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January 20, 2003
Pg. 1

Russia Helped U.S. On Nuclear Spying Inside North Korea

By James Risen

Russian intelligence officers secretly placed sophisticated nuclear detection equipment inside North Korea at the request of the Central Intelligence Agency in the 1990's, to assist the United States in tracking the North Korean nuclear weapons program, intelligence officials say.

The Russians placed nuclear monitors provided by the C.I.A. inside the Russian Embassy in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, to try to detect telltale signs of activity from the North Korean nuclear weapons program. The C.I.A. trained officers from the S.V.R., the Russian intelligence agency, in the operation of the American equipment, and the Russians then shared their findings with the Americans.

The joint operation has since ended, and it is unclear how long it lasted or whether it provided useful intelligence on the state of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. Nor would officials say whether the Russians placed detection equipment in other locations in North Korea besides their embassy in Pyongyang.

But the disclosure of the clandestine operation against the North Koreans reveals a remarkable level of intelligence cooperation between Moscow and Washington on one of the most important security issues in the post-cold-war era -- the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The decision by the C.I.A. to turn to the Russians for help also demonstrates how the United States has been forced to rely on assistance from other nations to collect information from inside North Korea, one of the most closed societies in the world.

Current and former American officials say the fact that the United States does not have an embassy in North Korea has made it difficult for C.I.A. officers to obtain direct access to the country. Overseas C.I.A. stations are usually inside American embassies, and undercover C.I.A. officers typically have diplomatic immunity and pose as employees of the State Department or other government agencies. As a result, the agency faces major hurdles in gathering intelligence in countries where the United States does not have permanent diplomatic representation.

"It is a very tough country to get data from," said one person familiar with American intelligence operations concerning North Korea. "We have tried every which way we can to get information."

The C.I.A. turned to its former adversaries in Russian intelligence for assistance to take advantage of Moscow's longstanding relationship with the North Korean government. The Soviet Union supported North Korea during the Korean War in the early 1950's and throughout the remainder of the cold war, until the Soviet collapse in 1991. North Korean nuclear scientists are believed to have received training in the Soviet Union. More recently, Russia has tried once again to improve its ties to North Korea, at least in part to enhance its economic links to South Korea and the larger Pacific marketplace.

Russia has also been trying to play an important diplomatic role in the current standoff between North Korea and the United States over the North's nuclear weapons program, which is no longer controlled by an agreement that suspended nuclear work, provided aid to North Korea and allowed international inspections. Over the weekend, in fact, a top Russian diplomat met with North Korean officials to propose a new plan to resolve the crisis.

The secret agreement between the C.I.A. and Russian intelligence came sometime in the early 1990's, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and at about the same time that the North Korean nuclear weapons program first emerged as a major international issue.

The joint operation represented a major test of efforts by the C.I.A. and S.V.R. to forge a new relationship in the post-cold-war period. Even though the C.I.A. had asked for the help, it did not completely trust the Russians to tell the truth about what the nuclear monitoring equipment detected, although there was apparently no evidence that the data received from the Russians had been altered or tampered with.

As the clandestine American-Russian operation was getting under way, the North Korean nuclear program was quickly becoming one of Washington's biggest post-cold-war concerns. North Korea had pledged not to develop nuclear weapons and had agreed to monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency, but by the early 1990's, there was growing evidence that North Korea was secretly flouting its agreements. As signs of North Korea's determination to build nuclear weapons mounted, the Clinton administration intervened, and hammered out a new agreement in 1994 aimed at freezing the North Korean nuclear program, particularly plutonium reprocessing at a facility in Yongbyon. Despite the agreement, American intelligence concluded that North Korea had generated enough fissile material to produce one or two nuclear bombs.

The latest crisis over the North Korean nuclear program erupted last year, when United States intelligence obtained strong evidence that North Korea had secretly developed a uranium enrichment program, which would represent a second track toward the development and production of nuclear weapons. American officials said there was fragmentary evidence of a uranium enrichment effort as far back as the late 1990's, but much more compelling evidence of such a program came last year, officials said. Now American officials fear that North Korea may be poised to break out with full-scale nuclear weapons production.

Plutonium reprocessing and uranium enrichment are the two routes to making fuel for nuclear bombs, and experts say detecting the different nuclear fuel production methods calls for different types of intelligence collection. American officials say North Korea has become adept at deception tactics to mask its weapons program, but there are certain signs intelligence experts look for.

Traditionally, uranium enrichment facilities have required large amounts of electricity and water, making it possible to identify them by spy satellite photographs of power grids and other industrial infrastructure.

Plutonium reprocessing, on the other hand, is a chemical process requiring less power and water, and so such plants can be situated in more remote locations, like Yongbyon, which is about 60 miles north of Pyongyang.

But plutonium reprocessing gives off distinctive emissions that can be tracked and measured, even in very small amounts. Experts familiar with the joint operation between the C.I.A. and Russian intelligence said plutonium reprocessing emits an isotope of krypton in gaseous form that is relatively easy to detect. The Russians were apparently given American sensing equipment to help analysts determine whether reprocessing was under way at Yongbyon, which after 1994 would have been a violation of the agreement reached under the Clinton administration, known as the Agreed Framework. The equipment could also help the C.I.A. determine whether plutonium reprocessing had secretly been moved to another site in North Korea.

"Krypton is a very good technical indicator that is hard to hide," said one person familiar with the intelligence efforts. "If you are able to situate the sniffers in the right places, then you could have confidence that you can find out whether plutonium reprocessing is going on or not."

In addition to the detection equipment the C.I.A. gave to Russian intelligence, the United States could use sensors on aircraft flying near North Korea, as well as ground-based sensors in nearby countries.
http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/20/international/asia/20INTE.html

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New York Times
January 20, 2003

Study Urges More Action To Cut Risks From Weapons Stockpiles

By Judith Miller

The United States, Russia and Europe should do far more to reduce the urgent and "grave proliferation risks" from their remaining stockpiles of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, concludes a new report endorsed by a consortium of influential private research centers.

Specifically, the report concludes, the United States and its European allies must begin treating Russia as a partner in such efforts rather than as a strategic charity case.

For its part, the report says, Russia must become more open and remove obstacles to cooperation to prevent the world's most lethal arms and technology from spreading to rogue states and terrorist groups.

The four-volume report was conceived as one of the most comprehensive public assessments of a decade of American and allied efforts to help Russia secure its strategic arms stockpiles and to reduce the dangers posed by its cold war legacies of vast unconventional arms stockpiles and personnel.

The three-year study, "Protecting Against the Spread of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons," has been endorsed by a group of 15 research organizations in the United States, Europe, Russia and Japan. It was financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the Washington foundation started by Ted Turner and Sam Nunn, a former Democratic senator from Georgia.

The first volume was written by Robert J. Einhorn and Michele A. Flournoy, former senior Clinton administration arms control and defense specialists now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. It is to be released today in London at a conference about efforts to secure and reduce stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. A copy was provided to The New York Times in advance.

At a summit meeting in Canada last June, the major industrial powers and Russia -- the Group of 8 -- agreed to spend $20 billion over the next 10 years to help Russia reduce the threat posed by its stockpiles.

The report notes that given the danger that these materials might be acquired by rogue states of terrorists, these nations should consider $20 billion a "floor" rather than a ceiling. It also recommends that nations "may wish to waive debt payments" in exchange for additional spending by Russia on such projects.

The study highlights progress made with a $7 billion investment in these efforts by the United States, much of it under Cooperative Threat Reduction programs started by legislation in the early 1990's sponsored by Senator Richard G. Lugar of Indiana, now Foreign Relations Committee chairman, and Mr. Nunn.

In the past decade, the report notes, nuclear materials have been removed from Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. The world's largest anthrax production facility at Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan, was dismantled.

The first prototype chemical weapons destruction plant in Russia is ready to operate, and more than 50,000 scientists who once worked in nuclear, biological and chemical weapons facilities have received aid.

Despite such steps, the report asserts that more ambitious measures are needed. The study found, for instance, that basic security upgrades had been completed at "facilities containing only 46 percent of the approximately 603 metric tons of Russia's weapons-usable nuclear materials" identified by the United States Department of Energy.

"Virtually none" of Russia's plutonium and "less than one-seventh" of its highly enriched uranium has been rendered unusable for nuclear weapons, the report says. "The same is true for the United States," it says.

The report emphasizes the continuing threat posed by Russia's biological stockpiles, about 20 major former Soviet facilities and at least two dozen smaller institutions.

"Thousands of weapons scientists and workers are still unemployed or underemployed," the report says, and susceptible to lucrative offers of work from countries that could have secret germ weapons programs.

Many Bush administration officials say Russia should not benefit from American assistance, given its reluctance to open facilities suspected of illicit arms research. Officials have also protested Russian aid to Iran's nuclear program.

But the report concludes that helping Russia secure and eliminate unconventional weapons stockpiles is too important to be held hostage to such concerns.
http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/20/international/20ARMS.html

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Washington Post
January 19, 2003
Pg. B3

It Was Never About A Smoking Gun

By David Kay

When it comes to the U.N. weapons inspection in Iraq, looking for a smoking gun is a fool's mission. That was true 11 years ago when I led the inspections there. It is no less true today -- even after the seemingly important discovery on Thursday of a dozen empty short-range missile warheads left over from the 1980s.

The only job the inspectors can expect to accomplish is confirming whether Iraq has voluntarily disarmed. That is not a task that need take months more. And last week's cache is irrelevant in answering that question, regardless of the U.N.'s final determination. That's because the answer is already clear: Iraqi is in breach of U.N. demands that it dismantle its weapons of mass destruction.

I am no apologist for the Iraqis, but not only are those warheads irrelevant to the larger argument, they could well be remnants that were overlooked, found as they were in a 25 square mile site that has a huge number of conventional warheads and rockets on it, rockets used principally in the Iran/Iraq war. The discovery was small -- the kind of thing inspectors often find -- and there's not much to be made of the warheads unless the testing shows they were once filled with VX gas.

The real problem lies with the way the searches are being conducted, period. The fact that day after day, the inspectors go to sites, most of which were inspected in the 1990s and put under long-term monitoring, has served Iraq's claims that it is complying with the inspections. It also ensures that these non-threatening inspections will continue for some time. Hans Blix, the chief U.N. weapons inspector, said last week that his required Jan. 27 report (stating whether Baghdad is fully complying with U.N. demands to disclose and dismantle any weapons of mass destruction program) will simply be an interim one. It will mark, Blix said, "the beginning of the inspection and monitoring process, not the end of it." That statement no doubt came as a surprise in Washington: Many members of the Bush administration have told me they were expecting the report to provide the basis for Security Council endorsement of military action to compel Baghdad to disarm. Blix appears to be drawing a very different conclusion: In the face of Iraq's denials that it has weapons, the inspections must continue.

What Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), are not doing is even more damning. Recall that Iraq was required to submit a "full and complete declaration" of all its weapons programs to the U.N. Security Council early last December. But that 12,000-page declaration was hardly complete, and its omissions (as well as gaps identified in 1998 -- more about that in a moment) should have become the focus of the inspections process.

UNMOVIC, the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, should use its limited resources to examine the seven gaps in the United Nations' knowledge and understanding of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, which were identified in 1998 by UNSCOM (the now defunct U.N. Special Commission) and an independent technical evaluation group. The gaps were alarming. They had to do with such things as anthrax, artillery shells filled with mustard gas, mobile biological weapons agent facilities and efforts to procure uranium.

By failing to address these concerns, Iraq mocked the United Nations with its declaration. It rejected what the Security Council, in Resolution 1441, insisted it must do -- that is, answer all outstanding questions about the program. And it had the gall to contend that it hasn't had a prohibited weapons program since the end of the Gulf War.

How quickly the experience of the first attempt to disarm Iraq by international inspections has been forgotten. That attempt, starting in 1991, also began with weapons declarations filled with lies and misstatements. As a result, the UNSCOM team I led was also forced to search for a smoking gun. It is a nearly impossible task, which is why is should never be the standard of mission success. Only two smoking guns were found during all the UNSCOM inspections in Iraq in the 1990s. The first -- Iraq's nuclear weapons complex -- came quickly in the summer and autumn of 1991. We were going after very large physical complexes that had been designed to deceive spy satellites -- but whose purpose could be detected by inspectors armed with good intelligence and aided by key Iraqi defectors.

In the next six years of UNSCOM inspections only one other such discovery was made -- when the existence of an Iraqi biological weapons program was finally uncovered in 1995. But it is often forgotten that the weapons themselves were not found by the inspectors. Iraq told the inspectors that it had destroyed the biological munitions, which, it said, had been stored inside abandoned railroad tunnels and buried along the runways at two military airfields. Even the best inspectors have almost no chance of discovering hidden weapons sites such as these in a country the size of Iraq.

We UNSCOM inspectors simply did not have the resources to win a game of hide and seek. The same is true today. The number of inspectors was always terribly small -- seldom more than 300 in the country at any one time. And we were totally outclassed by Iraqi security, which had managed to infiltrate the United Nations in Vienna and New York, as well as the Bahrain office of UNSCOM. In late 1991, when we seized more than 100,000 pages of information on Iraq's nuclear weapons program, we found one particularly surprising document. In it, the head of Iraqi security warned the chief security official of the facility holding the documents that in 10 days I would be leading a team to search his building and he should remove all sensitive material from this facility. The document was dated less than 48 hours after the decision had been made that I would lead this team! At the time fewer than 10 people in the United Nations and IAEA knew about this mission.

Much has been made of the value of surprise inspections, but little has been said about how hard they are to conduct. Between 1991 and 1998, UNSCOM conducted almost 500 inspections. Of those, only about six truly surprised Iraq. Then as now, the inspectors operated in an environment that was thoroughly monitored by Iraq. Hotel rooms, restaurants, offices and cars were all bugged. We understood that only with the most extraordinary measures could any of our conversations or documents elude Iraqi security officials.

By 1996, UNSCOM and the IAEA had switched almost entirely from searching for specific weapons to trying to limit the ease with which Iraq could use its permitted dual-use facilities to produce them.

The former inspectors I know react with disbelief to the list of sites the current inspectors have visited in the past seven weeks -- Taji, Daura, Al Hakam, Fallujah, Tarmiya, Rashdiya, Al Furat, Al Muthanna. No one, they say, should have believed that Saddam would ever let inspectors back into the country without ensuring that these sites, well monitored by UNSCOM until it left in '98, were thoroughly sanitized. Let's not forget that UNSCOM was never denied entry to a site it was monitoring. Far from denial, Iraq wanted UNSCOM and the IAEA to concentrate on the monitored sites and stop searching for clandestine facilities.

How did the inspectors get back into a game of hide and seek with the Iraqis?

This time, the Bush administration was determined that, rather than a search and find mission, the inspections would verify Iraq's willingness to be disarmed. This would be completely unlike the long, frustrating game the Iraqis played and ultimately won with the first U.N. inspection regime. This was to be Iraq's last chance. Any "false statements or omissions" in its December declaration were, according to Resolution 1441, supposed to "constitute a further material breach of Iraq's obligations." And "material breach" is the Security Council's standard for measuring whether military force is required to compel disarmament.

Inspections were not supposed to begin until 15 days after the declaration was due, in other words on Dec. 21. Instead, and this has gone almost completely unremarked, Blix and ElBaradei began the inspections on Nov. 27, 11 days before Iraq was to submit its declaration. So much for President Bush's injunction that the inspectors were there to confirm Iraq's voluntary disarmament. Thus the hunt for the smoking gun was on. The United States did not object to this change of strategy. In fact, it urged Blix and ElBaradei to make their search more effective, use their full powers and find the smoking gun.

It is easy, if painful, to see how the United Nations slid back into the fool's game of trying to find a smoking gun inside a totalitarian country such as Iraq. What is much harder to understand is why the Bush administration, which so clearly seemed to have understood that this was not a game that they wanted to play or could win, let itself be trapped like this. But trapped it is.

Even such tantalizing discoveries as last week's should not be seen as a promise of more compelling evidence to come if we would only give the inspectors more time. The only evidence of Iraq's weapons program we need has been clear since early December, when it filed yet another weapons declaration that was anything but full, final and complete. Iraq continues to ignore its international obligations. Let's not give it more time to cheat and retreat.

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A Nuclear Dilemma

Abandon the heavily flawed old pact and wait Pyongyang out

By Henry Sokolski and Victor Gilinsky

WASHINGTON --Former President Carter and others eager to heal the U.S. rift with North Korea and pull the country back from the nuclear brink are urging President Bush to return to the Agreed Framework, the 1994 bargain President Clinton struck with North Korea. They want to use it as the starting point to cut Pyongyang yet another deal. Instead, the U.S. should treat North Korea as a violator of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, declare it ineligible to receive the technology promised in the agreement and wait the current North Korean regime out.

The 1994 deal called for Pyongyang to freeze its known plutonium-producing facilities, remain a party to the nonproliferation treaty and, in time, allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspections. In exchange, Washington promised North Korea two large light-water reactors for power generation and to supply Pyongyang with interim fuel oil.

Why not use this deal as the starting point for another? Two reasons.

First, Pyongyang has already violated the deal's basic nuclear-weapons restrictions. North Korea has made it clear that it regards the nuclear-weapons option as vital for its defense, and that it will not allow the IAEA to conduct full inspections. Any new deal that again softens North Korea's obligation to permit comprehensive inspections will not only fail to check Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, it will cripple U.S. efforts to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons globally.

Second, the agreement's big carrots for getting North Korea to behave -- the light-water reactors -- are more amenable to producing plutonium for bombs than advertised and more impractical and unsafe for generating power than originally believed. It's absurd to keep building the power reactors in the vain hope that Pyongyang will give up its nuclear weapons in a verified way.

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty violation that led to the Agreed Framework came in 1992, when the IAEA discovered that the North Korea had been illicitly separating plutonium for bombs. North Korea tossed out the IAEA inspectors who tried to investigate, and then threatened to leave the treaty if pressed. The U.S. began negotiations with Pyongyang, which played its hand brilliantly. To cap the North's plutonium production, the Clinton administration promised the $5-billion power station and the interim fuel oil. North Korea was not required to submit, as any other state would have been, to immediate IAEA inspections.

Still, the deal required North Korea in time to come in line: Pyongyang was supposed to allow comprehensive IAEA inspections to be completed by the time the promised reactor project was half-built. North Korea was also obligated to implement the 1992 North-South denuclearization declaration, which forbade possession or production of nuclear explosives, including facilities for enriching uranium for bombs, and remain a party to the nonproliferation treaty.

The IAEA inspections, though, never started when they were supposed to -- by May 2002, according to the reactor construction schedule. With North Korea stiffing the IAEA and attacking the agency as a "tool" of a hostile U.S. policy, it became evident that Pyongyang was never going to permit IAEA inspectors to discover that the illicit plutonium was now in bombs.

In fact, what triggered the deal's breakdown was North Korea's realization that the Bush administration was going to enforce the Agreed Framework's inspection provisions. Pyongyang had gotten the idea from dealing with the Clinton administration that the United States would treat "full compliance" as a political determination, rather than as a technical one based on intensive inspections. Once it sunk in that real inspections were in the offing, the North knew the light-water reactor deal was headed up a blind alley. Under the deal, the North had to come into "full compliance" before it got the key nuclear components needed to complete the reactors. This Pyongyang would not do.

Given this and Pyongyang's vituperative spurning of IAEA inspections, it is bizarre that the U.S.-led consortium is still building these plants. The project never made sense in regard to supplying energy to the North. The two 1,000-megawatt light-water reactors are much too big to operate reliably on the small, flimsy North Korean electric grid. For this reason, they also cannot be operated safely. To avoid nuclear accidents, there must be reliable outside power sources for cooling when the reactor is not operating. Upgrading the grid to fix this would cost at least an additional $1 billion.

Another overlooked point is that the reactors were not, as the State Department claimed, "proliferation resistant." Light-water reactors make less plutonium than other reactors of the same size. But they are so much larger than the reactors the North Koreans were operating or building -- nearly 10 times larger -- that they could make twice as much plutonium as the North Korean ones they would have replaced. The initial output of one unit, after about a

year of operation, would be enough weapons-grade plutonium for about 50 bombs. The North Koreans would not have much trouble extracting it.

These facts should have invalidated the deal. The clincher for the Bush administration, though, was the revelation that Pyongyang had secretly gotten uranium-enrichment technology based on centrifuges, and possibly the centrifuges themselves, from Pakistan. This violated the 1992 North-South declaration, and thus the Agreed Framework, which incorporated it. Only after the North acknowledged the secret uranium-enrichment program did the United States announce a stop to fuel oil shipments. The North then withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, saying it would "never regret its withdrawal from the treaty."

If the U.S. now tries to get Pyongyang to rejoin the nonproliferation treaty by relaxing the conditions for IAEA inspections that the regime finds so offensive, we will have gutted the treaty. Its application elsewhere gets left out of the equation in so many of the proposals for dealing with North Korea. To think in terms of sweetening the pot will only set us up for more rounds of violations and blackmail.

Our choices are limited, to be sure. We must avoid being naive about Pyongyang while not turning the other cheek. We should support the IAEA in taking the nonproliferation treaty violations to the U.N. Security Council and wait the North Koreans out. They are not crazy -- they do things very carefully -- and it helps to remember that their leaders' choices are even more limited if they want to keep riding around in their Mercedes.

In the meantime, we have to avoid doing anything foolish -- like trying to resurrect the Agreed Framework, reactor deal and all -- out of an excessive eagerness to "solve" the problem. Above all, we must not legitimize Pyongyang's nuclear status, even indirectly, unless we want to assure the world's would-be bomb makers that once they cross the line, they can have the world at their feet.

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